



Open Letter to Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences Faculty, Staff, and Students

Today is my first official day as the inaugural chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS). I am excited and honored to be here, serving as your leader and advocate. In addition to leading our two in-person open meetings today, I am taking this opportunity to distribute the first in what will be a series of regular communications to the RBHS community.

I am most grateful to Chris Molloy for serving as interim chancellor and wish him well as he takes on the huge and important responsibility of being Rutgers' senior vice president for research and economic development.

For those of you whom I have met already through my recent introductory visits to all RBHS schools, centers, and institutes, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome I received. I was delighted to see the enthusiasm, commitment, and desire for excellence that you shared with me as I gave you a glimpse of my vision and we discussed our plans. Please note that I plan to continue to attend school- and center/institute-wide faculty meetings, and plan to meet with faculty and student organization representatives as well.

My Vision for RBHS

From my perspective as an outsider, the UMDNJ and Rutgers integration went remarkably smoothly (thanks to all who participated and especially to Chris for his leadership). The creation of RBHS is the first step in a process that, ultimately, will integrate multiple schools and programs into a single organization and give us a unique and powerful opportunity to create a new model for the delivery of health care. I strongly believe that many existing health care structures and practices will no longer work in the future. Together, we need to create new models for clinical care, educate the next generation of health care providers utilizing health care team approaches, and conduct research to evaluate these models. We must focus on population health rather than just treating illness; this will require novel inter-professional approaches. I believe that RBHS is perfectly positioned in this regard.

My vision for RBHS is that it will be unified, innovative, accessible, and excellent, and will make valuable contributions to the health and welfare of the community, the state of New Jersey, the United States, and the world. We need to demand excellence in all we do; this is a must for a first-class academic health center. We also need to select a few signature programs that will be world-class, for which Rutgers will become known nationally and internationally. Our extraordinary faculty, staff, and students are key to our success in this regard. We will reach out to our primary teaching hospitals in our strategic planning process, as well as the rest of Rutgers (see below). We will work with the new Rutgers to take advantage of the existing strengths of the university's academic programs internal and external to RBHS. Further, we will create new and/or expanded funding streams in order to achieve success, including clinical revenue, grant revenue, foundation support, private industry support, grateful patients, and technology transfer.

My goal, in partnership with you, is to build RBHS into one of the best academic health centers in the United States.

My Role

I intend to listen and learn from faculty, staff, and students to identify key issues and concerns. I will communicate openly and honestly. I plan to lead the faculty and support its research, teaching, clinical, and community service efforts. Each school will continue to focus on its distinguishing strengths, mission, and roles, of course. I also will focus on fostering interschool programs, including service, research, and training. The development of interschool programs will guide my efforts in leading key recruitments, such as program directors and chairs. Further, I will work to identify resources to support new initiatives. Some will come from new productivity and growth, some from opportunities for efficiency and elimination of duplication (possible because of the integration), and some from fund raising/development. I would also like to play a role in

educational programs, in areas where I have some expertise and, if desired, by giving lectures and leading seminars (please invite me!).

Plans for the Short Term

With this communication, I am announcing the launch of a bottom-up RBHS strategic plan to be folded into the evolving Rutgers strategic plan. I am asking all of you to participate in the planning process. Soon, a survey will be distributed to all in RBHS asking you to establish goals you would like to achieve, recommendations as to how we can accomplish these goals, and to identify key resources and concerns (impediments to your success). An additional survey will be distributed to Rutgers faculty inside and outside RBHS to ask them to identify interest/expertise in selected potential RBHS areas of excellence. This will help us identify signature programs that we can support, in part, by aggregating talent across departments, units, educational programs, schools, and centers/institutes. We will then create a series of working groups, some of which will focus on potential signature programs, and others that will focus on the infrastructure needed to support current activities and signature programs. The strategic plan will be overseen by a strategic planning committee consisting of representatives from RBHS senior leadership, faculty, staff, and students. Data collection will be completed in January. Working groups will be formed in January/February and will submit reports in March/April. The strategic plan will be finalized by June, 2014.

Plans for the Long Term

I have already begun to recruit new faculty leaders for RBHS and identify new resources needed to implement the strategic plan. I will continue to do so in 2014-15 and will work closely with the RBHS senior leaders and Rutgers leadership in this regard. Concurrently, I will work with the RBHS senior leadership to implement the strategic plan, beginning in July, 2014.

Thank you again for your warm welcome. I look forward to meeting you and working with you toward our common interests and to achieve our goals.

Brian L. Strom, M.D., M.P.H.
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