

Written Testimony of Dr. Enrico Benedetti, Interim Dean of the University of Illinois College of Medicine

July 14, 2026, Hearing Before Committee on Education and the Workforce, United States House of Representatives

Good morning, Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the Committee.

I am Dr. Enrico Benedetti, Interim Dean of the University of Illinois College of Medicine, a role I have held since January 2026. Our university's mission is to provide the broadest access to the highest levels of educational, research, and clinical excellence. I have spent more than 35 years at our College of Medicine as a resident, transplant surgeon, and head of surgery, and I have dedicated my career to advancing organ transplantation.

The College's primary goal is simple: to train excellent physicians who provide the best care to all patients, regardless of their own background or the background of those they serve. We provide a medical education that focuses on science, evidence-based medicine and the professional competencies required to care for patients. We are here to train physicians—we cannot allow anything to displace rigorous medical training or interfere with our core educational mission. Nothing should undermine the trust and relationships that must exist between patients and their doctors.

The College is committed to ensuring that its policies and practices comply with federal law. We are committed to providing a learning environment where all students—including Jewish students—feel safe, respected, and ready to learn. I am pleased to share that the College is taking concrete steps to continue to advance our mission:

- First, we will enforce our professionalism code to hold students accountable for hate speech and other misconduct, including conduct that occurs outside the classroom or clinic;
- Second, we discontinued an internal communication channel that had become a forum for inappropriate and offensive commentary;
- Third, we have changed our senior leadership structure to ensure clear lines of accountability. The new Vice Dean of Education will now have oversight over student complaints regarding misconduct;
- Fourth, we are updating the curriculum to better ensure that all of our physicians are trained to effectively treat patients from all communities; and

- Fifth, I have instituted an open-door policy so students, staff and faculty can bring concerns directly to me.

I am pleased to report that Jewish students and faculty, in particular, have told me that they feel safe and supported under my leadership. In the coming weeks, I will personally speak to our entire class of incoming medical students to make sure they understand the College's expectations for professionalism and respectful engagement within our diverse community.

These steps, among others, reinforce the College's focus on its core mission of training exceptional physicians. And they underscore that the College will not tolerate any form of hate, including antisemitism, or any behavior that undermines a professional and respectful learning environment. It is our collective responsibility to live the College's values of inclusivity, tolerance, respect, and excellence while training the next generation of physicians. Thank you.