

*Dr. Sheldon Retchin, CEO of Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, objected to Kaiser Health News's focus on his compensation incentives for growth and the bottom line. Following are excerpts from the interview.*

"I have to generate a margin for multiple missions. Among those missions are support of academic programs, including a massive teaching obligation, and a safety net obligation. We have the largest proportion of uninsured in the commonwealth of Virginia. And... with no margin I would not be able to support those missions. I cannot imagine a board saying, 'Your margin doesn't matter to us.' I think that would be irresponsible.

"This is an unusual institution in terms of its balanced portfolio. This is not a suburban hospital. This is not a Duke. We are an inner-city safety net, so the incentives that they provided me to balance this all out – the story is extraordinary.

"To say that I'm only interested in profits misses the entire mission.

"We train the most residents in the state of Virginia, then we take care of the largest uninsured population in the state of Virginia.

"The VCU Health System is being held up by the National Association of Public Hospitals as a paragon."