

**Before the Human Services Committee
Public Hearing, February 15, 2007**

**Testimony of Barbara Franklin, Certified Nursing Assistant
Marathon Healthcare of Waterbury
Member of District 1199**

**Supporting Proposed H.B. 5639, An Act Concerning Public
Hearings on Requests of Certain Long-Term Care Facilities to
Close or Reduce Bed Capacity**

Hello, members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Barbara Franklin and I work as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) & Central Supply Clerk at Marathon Healthcare Center of Waterbury (formerly Waterbury Greenery/Five Star).

I have worked at my nursing home for the past 18 years. We used to have 180 nursing beds and over time our facility was reduced to 150 beds and now we take care of approximately 120 residents.

I and my co-workers are family to our residents. We look out for our residents, give them baths, attend to their dressing and meals, provide for their medical needs and medications, clean their rooms and environment, cook their meals and do our best to take care of our residents as if they were our own mothers or fathers.

Over my 18 years of working at the nursing home I have witnessed the worsening conditions of the past 5 to 8 years that we've all been in crisis. Layoffs upon layoffs of nurses, CNAs and housekeeping and laundry workers. Cut backs in ordering supplies and even worse – we've had big drops in recreation activities and rehab care for the residents.

Last April our facility announced out of the blue that they would be closing in 90 days. This was about money, not about the residents. Five Star told us they were closing because they were losing too much money. They had not filed a Certificate of Need application to close, but the same day they filed a Letter of Intent to close with DSS our administrator announced to the staff and residents they would close. No ifs, ands or buts, they were closing. And they kept saying so in the newspaper even though they never filed to close and the state hadn't given them permission to close.

This caused tremendous stress on me and my co-workers. But more importantly the effects on our residents were devastating. Residents and family members were crying daily, one particular resident met with the other patients and on her own wrote a letter and petition asking the state to appoint a receiver and hold a public hearing so residents who can't travel to Hartford could speak their concerns. We had a press conference at the Capitol and our residents and their family members wanted to come and we couldn't bring them.

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Member of New England Health Care Employees Union. District 1199, SEIU

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One man who used to be so happy and outgoing withdrew into a shell and wouldn't talk or laugh the way he had. Another patient who had been there a long time and had been in good shape suddenly had a stroke and later died. The stress of hearing that they were losing not just their surroundings, their friends, their familiar caregivers and their actual home sent them downhill fast and the sale came too late to rescue them. I cry every time I think about what happened to them.

We fought hard to keep our facility open for enough time for a new operator, Marathon Healthcare Group, to complete the sale. We know that we were in the minority – most homes that announce closure plans go ahead and close before the state or a new buyer steps in, and that just isn't fair or right.

Residents need to be listened to and their concerns should be heard and addressed. They shouldn't be treated like furniture being moved from one business location to the next, they should be respected and admired and cared for.

I ask you to support Bill #5639 so residents at other nursing homes don't have to go through what our patients went through without having a chance to attend a public hearing at their facility. They cannot come to Hartford, they and their families should be allowed to speak at their facility about their concerns when a facility wants to close.

Thank you.