

**Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bills 386, 373 and 379**  
**An Act Concerning Nursing Facility Relocation**  
**By Andrew H. Banoff, President & CEO of The Jewish Home for the Elderly**

**Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly**

**February 6, 2007**

Greetings Chairperson Harris, Vice Chairperson Coleman, and all the Members of the Human Services Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Senate Bills 386, 373 and 379, An Act Concerning Nursing Facility Relocation.

I believe that enactment of this change to the moratorium is consistent with the intent of the statute, the State's Long-Term Plan, and our collective goal to improve nursing homes for our elders.

As I am sure the Members of the Committee are aware, Connecticut's long-term care system is facing significant challenges. According to U.S. Census projections, the number of people over the age of 65 in the State of Connecticut will increase by 50% over the next 20 years.<sup>1</sup> As this population becomes frail with age, there could be an overwhelming burden to the State's Medicaid system, which currently absorbs over half of all the long-term care expenses incurred in Connecticut.<sup>2</sup> The bulk of these State and Federal expenditures are due to nursing home utilization, which is troublesome given that most elderly people would prefer to age in their homes or in less restrictive, less expensive settings. The upcoming baby-boomer generation of seniors is going to be significantly less willing to tolerate institutional care as they become disabled with age, and the current infrastructure for home and community-based care is simply not going to be enough to meet their needs.

In response to the changing long-term care environment, The Jewish Home for the Elderly, a 360-bed Skilled Nursing Facility in Fairfield, CT, is planning the development of a new Senior Living Campus in Monroe, CT. The site is approximately six (6) miles from our current location in Fairfield. It is large enough to allow for the development of Independent and Assisted Living and a replacement of our current Skilled Nursing facility in Fairfield, CT in such a way as to establish a life enhancing and a quality of life environment for the elderly that would be a model of a truly integrated senior living community for the State and our region.

The new Campus would consist of approximately 40 acres located on Route 25 on the Trumbull/Monroe border. Within approximately 750,000 square feet, we propose to build:

- 210 Independent Living (IL) cottages and apartments
- 40 Assisted Living (AL) units (1-bedroom)
- 280 Skilled Nursing (SNF) beds, including 40 beds dedicated to Post-Acute Rehabilitation Services
- We will also continue to offer Adult Day Care, Child Care, Home Care, Geriatric Assessment, Care Management, Outpatient Primary Care, and Outpatient Physical Therapy

The Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) component of the project will use a Life Care model of services that will give our clients access to services at any level of care (IL/AL/SNF) for the rest

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Interim State Population Projections, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> The Connecticut Long-Term Care Planning Committee. Balancing the System: Working Toward Real Choice for Long-Term Care in Connecticut: A Report to the General Assembly for Jan 2007. DRAFT

of their lives. Clients will incur an entrance fee as well as a fixed (plus inflation) monthly fee for the duration of their stay. We seek to decrease the fragmentation in healthcare currently experienced by aging seniors in Fairfield County by consistently maximizing the independence of our residents throughout the entire aging process.

The Jewish Home's proposed Senior Living Campus makes sense for Connecticut for many reasons, including:

1. *The new Nursing Home will improve the Quality and Dignity of the lives of the residents we serve.* The Jewish Home's new Senior Living Campus will be the first new nursing home to be built in Connecticut in quite some time, and we think it is a tremendous opportunity to introduce cutting-edge paradigms of what quality long-term care can be. Taking a cue from the national Robert Wood Johnson Long Term Care Demonstration Project, we have proposed to host Connecticut's first Greenhouse pilot project. Greenhouses do away with the traditional skilled nursing facility model and create real "homes" for small groups of residents. The new nursing home will also feature private rooms and bathrooms for every resident, designed to maximize dignity and quality of life.
2. *The Senior Living Campus will decrease The Jewish Home's reliance on State Medicaid funds and save taxpayer dollars.* By reducing our skilled nursing beds from 360 to 280, we estimate that we will save the State approximately \$6 million per year in Medicaid funds.
3. *The reduction of beds will not adversely affect bed availability in Fairfield County.* We are only proposing a 1% decrease in the total available beds in Fairfield. The Legislature has set the standard for "need for beds" at a 97.5% occupancy rate in the affected area. Given the Office of Policy and Management's 2005 census of 94% bed occupancy in Fairfield County<sup>3</sup>, our reduction will not create a capacity problem for our region.
4. *The Senior Living Campus is in keeping with the State of Connecticut's Long-Term Care Plan's philosophy of "balancing the system".* With the passing of Public Act 05-14, the State Legislature made it a priority to enact policies that would "provide that individuals with long-term care needs have the option to choose and receive long-term care and support in the least restrictive, appropriate setting." The Commission on Aging, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Public Health, HUD, the Office of Policy and Management, OHCA, and other State and Federal agencies have implemented policies to help move Connecticut's long-term care system into a better balance between usage of community services and institutional care, while also promoting the purchase of private long-term care insurance policies to help conserve future Medicaid dollars. Examples of these initiatives include, but are not limited to; the Connecticut Partnership for Long-Term Care, the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders, the Personal Care Assistance Pilot, the Assisted Living Pilot, seven Federal Systems Change grants that have been awarded to Connecticut since 2002, presumptive Medicaid eligibility for people accessing home and community services, the Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration, as well as several approvals for CCRC's. This illustrates how the State can forge ahead with partnerships with organizations like The Jewish Home to ensure the well-being of seniors and the financial viability of the system as a whole.
5. *The Senior Living Campus will increase the quality of long-term care available in Fairfield County, while satisfying an unmet need in the community.* The Jewish Home proposes to create more housing options for seniors that maximize functionality in the least restrictive setting, promotes investment in long-term care insurance products, and decreases the number of skilled nursing beds in favor of assisted living and residential care settings. Seniors who become part of this new Campus will never have to be

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<sup>3</sup> CT Office of Policy and Management. "State of Connecticut Annual Nursing Home Census, Sept 30, 2005." [http://www.opm.state.ct.us/pdpd4/lrc/researcher/2006Feb\\_FactSheet.pdf](http://www.opm.state.ct.us/pdpd4/lrc/researcher/2006Feb_FactSheet.pdf), Accessed 12/1/06.

moved to a different location when they require a higher level of care, which will allow couples to stay together even if their needs differ as they age. Our market research tells us that the demand for this form of long-term care far outweighs the availability of this type of long-term care in Fairfield County. The other CCRC's in Fairfield County have waitlists and do not have enough units to meet demand.

6. *The new Senior Living Campus will increase economic opportunity in Fairfield County.* Our services will expand from serving 360 to over 700 residents. There will be tremendous opportunity for new jobs and increased business in the surrounding areas. It should also be mentioned that the Town of Monroe is fully supportive of our initiative, and I have included a signed letter of support from Andrew Nunn, First Selectman of the Town of Monroe. Additional letters of support are enclosed from: Rosa DeLauro, Member of Congress; Robert Scinto, Chairman Robert D. Scinto, Inc.; Michael Marcus; Mark A. Lapine; Judy Brown; Russell Beitman; Bill Mitchell; and Sid Fialk, as well as Residents of The Jewish Home. Finally, I have attached testimony from Carl Glickman who had planned on being with us today, but unfortunately, could not be here.

In order to make our Senior Living Campus a reality, we will need to move our current Skilled Nursing Home beds six (6) miles from Fairfield to Monroe. Our current property cannot accommodate the scope of our plans. Keeping our nursing home on the same property as the residential neighborhood is key to the continuum concept of the Senior Living Campus, and will also bring efficiencies of service.

The Department of Social Services' interpretation of the current moratorium on nursing homes, statutes §§17b-352 and 17b-353, prohibits the relocation of Skilled Nursing Beds to a different location. This law was designed over 15 years ago to decrease the overall number of beds, while ensuring that seniors had sufficient access to this level of care. **As the proposed Senior Living Campus will not adversely affect access to nursing care in Fairfield County, and will in fact enhance access to long-term care in the area, I am requesting immediate enactment of Senate Bills 386, 373 and 379.** This piece of legislation will make a change to the moratorium for nursing homes that need to relocate their beds as part of a CCRC within their current service area. I believe that these specifications will enable the State to remain in control of local bed availability, while also promoting more cost-effective forms of long-term care that will make the system as a whole more sustainable in years to come.

Once implemented, we will work closely with the Department of Social Services to submit a Certificate of Need application and, of course, the Department has the administrative authority to ensure implementation consistent with this rationale.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to working with the Human Services Committee and the State Legislature to enact this piece of legislation and to making our vision a reality.

Attachments