

Statement of Martin Sbriglio
on behalf of the
Connecticut Alliance for Subacute Care Facilities
Senate Bill 401
March 16, 2009

Sen. Harris, Rep. Ritter and members of the committee:

My name is Martin Sbriglio. I am CEO of Ryder's Health, which operates a number of small skilled nursing facilities in Connecticut. I also serve as president of the Connecticut Alliance of Subacute Care Facilities, an association incorporated here in the state with several affiliated members.

I would like to discuss Senate Bill 401 and then I'd like you to hear from one of our employees, Ms. Michelle Farmer.

I appreciate your interest in looking at how the Medicaid rate is calculated for skilled nursing facilities. The bill will revise the so-called "fair rent" component.

But you are missing a very critical element—and that is how the state now handles payment for cases that are pending Title XIX approval.

We take in individuals who are in the process of applying for Medicaid. The applications are detailed and until the individual is approved, we absorb the full cost of their care. Everything. We don't receive any funding from the state for pending cases.

This is a huge drain on a facility's cash flow.

I have facilities that have provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in care—and we have yet to see a penny from DSS for this because the application for Medicaid has not been approved. In many cases, this delay is due to the refusal of the individual's family (or power of attorney if different) to provide the state with all of the documents and financial information they need in order to make a decision.

I am asking that you add a provision to this bill that gives the Attorney General authority to intervene and compel compliance by family members or powers of attorney in cases where a Title XIX application is pending.

On a related issue, we have been receiving "below inflation" rate increases from the state for several years now even as our costs go through the roof.

You've read about more skilled nursing facilities going into bankruptcy.

That trend will accelerate if we do not receive a rate increase each year in the next biennium.

I am not some huge out-of-state conglomerate. My family has been in the business of caring for seniors in Connecticut for over 50 years. We pride ourselves on the level of care we provide our residents.

We want the highest quality care for them. I know you do, too. But please help us. If you enact the change I mentioned, you will do that.

I'd now like to ask Michelle Farmer, an employee at Ryder's Health, to make a few comments. Thank you.