

**Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Adult Day Centers
Testimony Submitted to Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Deficit Mitigation Plan
and the Impact of the Governor's Rescissions
December 09, 2009**

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Michael Hebert, Program Director of Grasmere by the Sea Adult Day Services, a community service of the Jewish Home for the Elderly of Fairfield County. I am also a member of the Connecticut Association of Adult Day Centers, an organization of 46 adult day centers from across the state. I am writing today to speak in strong opposition of the proposed cuts by Governor Rell to rescind the 4.2% rate increase awarded to our adult day centers in 2009 and the plan to decrease Medicaid rates an additional 5% under the DSS Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE).

The fact that our State Senators and Representatives voted in an adult day services increase of 4.2% this year during Connecticut's worst economy speaks to realization that our adult day centers are in dire fiscal shape and the per diem rate of \$63.55 for nursing care, case management, personal care services, nutritional services, social work services, therapeutic recreational services, dementia care services, rehabilitative therapies, and door-to-door wheelchair escorted transportation is grossly inadequate with the cost of delivering these comprehensive services.

In 2009, three highly respected centers (McLean Home (Simsbury), Edward Miller (Shelton) and Visiting Nurse & Health Services of CT (Tolland) closed their adult day center doors or withdrew from the DSS Connecticut Home Care Program (CHCPE) Medicaid-waiver program due to inadequate reimbursement and operating losses. My own nonprofit organization, The Jewish Home for the Elderly consolidated both our Jewish Home Adult Day Center and Grasmere Eldercare centers in Fairfield to provide one comprehensive program called Grasmere by the Sea. Based on the recommendations of the CT Long Term Care Needs Survey, the Jewish Home has invested in our new adult day center facility because we have been lead to believe that the future of long term care in Connecticut is in community-based services as we rebalance the financing of our long term care system in Connecticut and nationally.

It has been well documented by this study and DSS that community based services like adult day centers and the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE) save our state budget millions of dollars in Medicaid and state funding. Now we want to charge level I and level II state-funded CHCPE clients a 15% per month cost sharing fee to remain eligible for the this vital funding source. For many (20% of the CHCPE caseload) of these clients and their caregivers who rely on these preventive community-based services, this could represent from \$200 - \$400 per month out-of-pocket costs toward their care plan expenses. Given the rising heating fuel, prescription drug and health care expenses, many of these CHCPE recipients may opt out of the program to pay for these other living expenses and forego needed care. Once again, this is "Penny-wise and pound-foolish" as these preventive long-term care services are substantially cheaper than the alternative of hospitalizations and premature nursing home placement.

There is also an inherent contradiction in Connecticut as we worked to transition persons from nursing homes back to the community with the Money follows the Person Program yet we are denying access and creating eligibility barriers to these same community-based services to elderly and their caregivers by the 15% copayment on the state-funded Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders with the proposed cost-sharing on January 1, 2010. Although we highly support the money Follows the Person philosophy we are potentially forcing existing community-based elders into institutional settings sooner through these copayments and the discontinuation of services. In addition, waiting lists grow everyday for Alzheimer's Respite and Statewide Caregiver Respite Programs, Social Service Block Grant funds for community-based services and delayed processing times for Title 19 applicants due to a shortage of eligibility workers. In my own center, I have two families who have been awaiting Level III eligibility for the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders and Medicaid since August 2009 and we have funded them through foundation support and fundraising during this eligibility process. Many of our urban adult day centers report that Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders clients comprise 95-100% of their program enrollments. The loss of the 4.2% and/or the prospect on an additional 5% to their CHCPE reimbursement rates would cause financial devastation to their centers and we would be likely to see more centers close in the year ahead.

We understand the economic challenges the State of Connecticut and DSS faces to balance the budget deficit but to place this burden on the backs of our frailest elders, their caregivers and our provider agencies trying to support their desire to remain in their respective communities is unconceivable

Please retain the 4.2% rate increase (\$66.22 per diem) for our adult day centers in the DSS budget, reject the additional 5% rate decrease to Medicaid and CHCPE providers and reject the recommendation to impose a 15% copayment of the state-funded portion of the CHCPE to ensure that this community based option remains a viable choice for the elderly in our state. I would be happy to answer any questions. I can be contacted at (203) 365-6469 or at mhebert@jhe.org.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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