



12/09/09

Written testimony of Karen H. Chadderton, Administrator of Riverside Health & Rehabilitation Center In Opposition to 2% Medicaid Nursing Home Rate Reduction proposed in Governor's State Budget Deficit Mitigating Plan

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Karen Chadderton. I am the Administrator at Riverside Health & Rehabilitation Center in East Hartford, Connecticut. Riverside is a 345 bed skilled nursing and sub acute facility with 450 employees who have been providing care to those in our community for almost 30 years. Providing for its residents, families and the staff has been the heart and soul of my professional career for 28 years. I am proud of the work that the Riverside Team does to ensure the quality of care in the most challenging of times. This year, Riverside was the proud recipient of the American Health Care Association's Step Two Quality Award given in recognition of our focus to provide the highest quality of care to our residents. These efforts will be seriously negatively impacted if the Governor's proposed plan is initiated.

I am here today to ask the Appropriations Committee to take a strong position in opposition to the proposal from the Governor to cut nursing home Medicaid rates by the 2% included in the Governor's most recent State Budget Deficit Mitigation Plan.

This Committee should recognize that this unsustainable proposal comes on the heels of the very deep cuts to Connecticut nursing home funding in the recently adopted two year Connecticut State budget, as well as the millions in Medicare cuts made earlier this year, and still further cuts proposed by Congress in the pending healthcare reform legislation.

Almost \$300 million in nursing home cuts were adopted in the most recent two-year state budget. For Riverside, the elimination of the statutory nursing home rate rebasing, the elimination of the annual cost of living adjustment as well as a reduction in our Medicare reimbursement this past October has already forced a reduction of labor hours.

Connecticut nursing homes, like Riverside, face the near certain prospect of even further federal Medicare cuts with the adoption of health care reform legislation pending in Congress. The additional cuts recommended by Governor Rell are simply unsustainable. If adopted, the Governor's proposal will close nursing homes, jeopardize care for thousands of frail and elderly residents, and eliminate jobs for thousands of caregivers across the State. The quality of care



that Riverside is well known for providing will be seriously undermined should this proposal be adopted.

The loss of nursing homes at a time when the population of elderly is increasing yearly, will leave those Connecticut residents whose needs require 24 hours per day, 7 days per week skilled care without the resources necessary to provide that care.

Please don't take the heart out of the care we provide by making it fiscally impossible to do so. For these reasons I urge you to reject the Governor's proposed Medicaid rate cuts to nursing homes and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.