

LENDALE CENTER
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February 14, 2014

Please accept this written testimony of Giovanna Griffin, Senior Administrator, Genesis HealthCare Glendale Center, Concerning the Governor's Midterm Budget Adjustment proposal for FY 2015

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Giovanna Griffin and I am the Senior Administrator for Genesis HealthCare Glendale Center in Naugatuck, CT. We provide both long stay and short stay sub-acute medical care with our 120 licensed skilled nursing home beds. We service over 800 admissions and discharges a year in the New Haven County while exceeding industry standards with customer and staff satisfaction, reduced re-hospitalization rates and other clinical standards. We have received the American Health Care Association's Silver Quality Award, maintain our JCAHO accreditation and employ over 125 professional staff members with a longevity average of 7 plus years in nursing, rehabilitation, dietary, maintenance, housekeeping, laundry, social service, therapeutic recreation, administrative professionals and the like. These staff members exceed education capacity in most cases with associates, bachelors, advanced certificates, and master's degrees. We are the tenth largest tax payer in the City of Naugatuck.

Although I am not able to be with you this evening, please know that many of our loyal staff stayed overnight, including me, at Glendale to ensure quality care is not effected in any way due to the weather conditions Wednesday and Thursday evenings like we do for most storms. We still wanted to be sure you received a simple message from our nursing center, and on behalf of our residents, patients, and caregivers: ***Our nursing facility needs your help.*** We just can't continue on a path where no help is provided without losing employees and jeopardizing quality. We are very mindful and understanding of Connecticut's fiscal challenges. But at a time when we need our state government most to help us maintain the quality of care that we are known for, and required of us, **we have to continue to speak up.** For example, last session, the adopted budget right cut \$53.4 million in FY 2014 and \$81.0 million in FY 2015 from Medicaid spending estimates related to savings associated with eliminating the scheduled rebasing of rates effective July 1, 2013 and the inflation estimated for July 1, 2014. An additional proposed nursing facility funding cut of \$11.0 million in FY 2014 and \$14.8 million in FY 2015 was only partially restored, leaving a \$5 million reduction.

Regrettably, under the adopted rate formula, most nursing facility rates were cut at a time when operating costs continue to move upwards, costs such as insurance, food, property taxes, wages, repairs and utilities.

Especially given the state surplus, these cuts were badly timed. Connecticut nursing facilities remain in a period of ongoing financial distress. Medicare reductions in 2012 were as high as 16% in many Connecticut nursing homes. Further, nursing homes were cut an additional 2% in the Medicare sequestration last year. At the state level, the gap under Medicaid between providing care and its costs is widening dramatically. This year nursing home providers will on average be reimbursed \$25.43 per patient day less than what it costs to care for our residents. For the typical nursing facility, this represents over \$500,000 per year in unfunded costs. There has been no Medicaid rate increases in the system since 2007, except for increase made possible by raising the user fees paid by nursing homes themselves (again, cut by \$5 million last session).

The Fair Rent component of the rate formula, which incents nursing facility quality improvement, has been restored only to its 2009 level, and the system still fails to reimburse for improving patient care and safety with new furniture, beds and other types of equipment, known as moveable equipment. This is especially important given that many nursing facilities in Connecticut are nearly 40 years old (we were built in 1974) and have the need for ongoing investment in the facility infrastructure, including meeting updated building requirements, new equipment and life and safety infrastructure maintenance.

This follows a sustained period of nursing facility receiverships, bankruptcies, closures, and Medicaid hardship rate relief requests. Yet there are 1 million baby boomers in Connecticut. There are 600,000 residents in Connecticut over the age of 60. Connecticut's aging population is among the oldest in the Nation, with over 160,000 Connecticut citizens over the age of 80 according to a December 2012 report issued by the U.S. Census Bureau. Much is being asked of our nursing facilities today, and more will be asked in the future, given the dramatic aging of our population, the need to reform rates as the state continues in the direction of long term care rebalancing and rightsizing. These changes will mean that the acuity and numbers of nursing facility residents will continue to rise measurably as our population ages, even as more residents choose home and community based environments to receive their care. On average, Connecticut nursing facilities are 91% full. The notion that our nursing homes are not needed is false. While we have supported efforts to increase care at home in such programs as Money Follows the Person, we are asking the Appropriations Committee to recognize that home care is not always the best options for our rapidly aging population. Even with the emphasis on home care present today, nursing facilities will remain a critical component in the continuum of long term care, especially to prevent an avoidable readmission to a hospital.

In conclusion, **we are asking the committee to address the ongoing needs of our nursing facilities.** We ask you to consider skilled nursing facilities as a critical, and cost-effective, component of the future of post acute care in our state---in reducing avoidable hospital stays and in providing more transitional services for residents who will eventually go home. Toward these ends, we are asking to work with you to (1) create a

payment system which incents nursing facility quality improvement with payment methods to reduce licensed beds consistent with the state's long term care rebalancing and rightsizing goals, (2) totally restore the cuts from last session; (3) continue to work to resolve the ongoing excessive delays in the Medicaid eligibility process; and finally (4) reverse the current trend of flat or reduced funding and recognize the importance of nursing facility care going forward as essential in the continuum of long term care.

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have and even encourage you to visit us or one of our sister homes to identify to you not only the professionals committed to caring for this ill population but also to recognize the harm additional reimbursement reductions with increased regulations will cause.

Most sincerely,

Giovanna Griffin and the Department and Unit Managers of Glendale Center

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Marisa J. Joseph RD, CD-N

Marianne Schmitt

Wyllie Powell

Jeanne McDuff CRR

Jacey Samelaom

Barbara Andrews RN, UM

Jean Wedge RN NPE

Maria Sebastian's RN, UM

Susan Jacobaski RN

Debra Y. Lant RN

Michelle Boudin RN

Patricia A. Busch

Jack Br FSD

Raymond Pezz

Christine Sansini, CTRS

Team Members

Our staff is dedicated to providing extended medical services in an atmosphere that preserves the dignity of each patient. Our goal is to restore and enhance the quality of life for all our patients. If you have any questions and/or concerns, the following staff members will be available to assist you.

<i>Administrator</i>	<i>Giovanna Griffin</i>
<i>Medical Director</i>	<i>Dr. Leonardo Kolianni, MD</i>
<i>Director of Nursing Services</i>	<i>Sue Jacoboski, RN</i>
<i>Nurse Navigator</i>	<i>Michelle Boisvert, RN</i>
<i>Unit Managers</i>	<i>Maria Sebastiano, RN, ADNS Barbara Andrews, RN, and Doreen Lloret, RN</i>
<i>Staff Development Coordinator/ Infection Control Coordinator</i>	<i>Joan Wedge, RN</i>
<i>Rehabilitation Therapy Program Manager</i>	<i>Tracey Samela, OTR/L</i>
<i>Admissions Director</i>	<i>Patricia Birch</i>
<i>Director of Social Services</i>	<i>Melissa Scott</i>
<i>Director of Therapeutic Recreation</i>	<i>Christine Sonsini, CTRS</i>
<i>Business Office Manager</i>	<i>Nancy Gaboardi</i>
<i>Dietician</i>	<i>Marissa Loscher, RD</i>
<i>Director of Food Service</i>	<i>Sarah Bird</i>
<i>Director of Environmental Services, Maintenance and Safety Officer</i>	<i>John Symolon</i>
<i>Clinical Reimbursement Coordinator</i>	<i>Nancy Luddy, RN</i>
<i>Staff Scheduling Manager</i>	<i>Julie Shuster, GNAS</i>
<i>Staff Benefits Coordinator</i>	<i>Elizabeth (Betsey) Geloso</i>
<i>Day Receptionist</i>	<i>Theresa Terry</i>