



**March 4, 2014**

**Written testimony of in Support of S.B. No. 253 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TEMPORARY NURSING HOME BED REDUCTIONS.**

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie and to the members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Kristi C. Dougherty. I am the Administrator at Vernon Manor Health Care Center in Vernon, Connecticut. Vernon Manor Health Care is a longstanding provider of nursing care in the community. Vernon Manor is a 120 bed skilled nursing facility with 190 full time/part time/per diem employees. We are CCRC-CARF accredited, the recipient of the Bronze and Silver AHCA Quality Awards, recognized by US News and World Report as one of the top nursing homes in the US for the past 3 years and has held the level of CMS 5 Star rating for more than 4 years. The owner of the facility is the president of CAHCF in addition to being President of the Board of Directors for Qualidigm-Ct Quality Improvement Organization and a member of UCONN Health Studies Advisory Committee and I am here this afternoon to ask the Human Services Committee to support **S.B. No. 253 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TEMPORARY NURSING HOME BED REDUCTIONS. This bill is being advanced by the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF), of which our organization is a member.**

This legislation will accelerate the state's long term care rebalancing goals, while improving resident care and maintaining the viability the skilled nursing facilities facing low census. The bill accomplishes these policy goals by providing for the temporary or permanent de-licensing of nursing home beds. This program has been modeled after a similar program in Rhode Island and has been modified to fit Connecticut's needs. The proposal will add to the range of current long term care rightsizing and rebalancing initiatives underway

The policy advanced in the bill would allow a facility to temporarily remove currently licensed beds from service. The beds must remain unlicensed for a minimum of six months. The beds would be available for transfer or sale in accordance with existing Connecticut law (17b-354 CGS). In order for beds to be temporarily de-licensed and have the facility qualify for a rate increase, the facility's utilization and the overall utilization in a specified geographical area must be able to absorb the reduction within current vacancies.

The bill would allow Vernon Manor Health Care Center to operate much more efficiently and cost effectively, thereby assuring stability in the delivery of skilled nursing facility services in our region, but at the desired lower bed capacity. [Add a supporting statement that is specific

to your nursing facility(s) situation]. At once, the bill will advance the state's rebalancing policy goals because the supply of nursing facilities beds will be de-licensed temporarily, and in many cases permanently, unless the need for the reinstatement of beds can demonstrated.

Our state can accelerate it's rebalancing goals with this bill, while establishing a clear policy that provides an organized and stable approach to delivering high quality nursing facility services with fewer beds.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
Kristi C. Dougherty BSN, MBA  
Administrator