



February 27, 2015

Written testimony of Maritza DeFlorio, Regional Director of Finance for Candlewood Valley Health & Rehabilitation Center, Wilton Meadows Health & Rehabilitation Center and Hamden Health Care Center, Concerning the Governor's Recommended FY 2016 and FY 2017 Proposed Budget

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Maritza DeFlorio. I am the Regional Director of Finance at Candlewood Valley Health & Rehabilitation, Wilton Meadows Health & Rehabilitation and Hamden Health Care in New Milford, Wilton and Hamden, Connecticut. Our facilities Candlewood Valley, Wilton Meadows and Hamden Health Care are longstanding providers of nursing and rehabilitation care in the communities of Litchfield, New Haven and Fairfield Counties. Our facilities have 448 beds in which we offer Medicaid, Medicare and Veterans recipients a place to heal, strengthen and return back to their communities when able or have quality care and compassion for those whose acuity requires them to stay with us. Our facilities employ 617 of your constituents and vibrant members of these communities our facilities also are Silver and Bronze Award Winners and partners with the local Alzheimer's Association in training our staffs and training others in the industry in caring for the Alzheimer and Dementia population.

I want to begin by letting you know how proud I am to be able to share with you the rewarding and hard work that our facilities provide to their communities of Candlewood Valley, Wilton Meadows and Hamden Health. As the Regional Director of Finance I see every day how our workers do an amazing job, and I am so grateful to them, and proud of them, for everything they are doing. Realistically it is an uphill battle to provide the care the human touch to all of our residents with the severe underfunding in the Medicaid Rate.

But making the care great has so many challenges. And the reason it's getting so hard isn't really difficult to understand---there has been almost no help in the budget for now going on 8 years. Flat while almost all of our costs are going up. If the budget passes as is, it will be a decade of nearly flat funding for our nursing facility. The idea that our nursing facility could be cut this session because of our state's ongoing financial troubles is so devastating---even beyond my ability to understand how we could deliver the care we want to deliver. I am not sure how I could implement any cuts as the Director of Finance or how the Administrators would tell our employees or residents that we need to cut even more than our flat funding has required over the years.

Here are some examples of what we've been up against while the rates have been stagnant:

- Cost of Food, Utilities, Wages and Health Care Insurance have soared in this past year alone.
- At Candlewood, Wilton and Hamden the needs of our residents are also increasing the acuity of our residents is so much more complex as our population's ages. And that there are more options for those with fewer care needs to be home and getting services there. But the residents that come to Candlewood, Wilton or Hamden need to be with us. The needs are too complex for care at home.
- We have successfully moved residents that are able to go home with Money Follows the Person in their own homes. But many of them require 24/7 care and we deliver that efficiently and cost effectively while meeting the high standards and requirements put forth by the Department of Health and Human Services and the State of Connecticut.

Please help us deliver the high quality care we want to deliver. Please give us the resources we need to do it.

Respectfully,



Maritza DeFlorio

Regional Director of Finance

TransCon Builders LTC Division