



February 27, 2015

Written testimony of Andrew Steiner, Administrator, Abbott Terrace Health Center in Waterbury, Connecticut 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 Andrew Steiner and I represent the Abbott Terrace Health Center in Waterbury, Connecticut as their Administrator. Abbott Terrace is a 205 bed skilled nursing facility in the heart of downtown Waterbury. We employ nearly 350 employees. Our health center has served the Waterbury Community for over 30 years and is a bedrock safety net facility that works hand-in-hand with our region's hospitals, social services agencies and community health providers to deliver care to a high acuity population with often deep psychosocial needs. In addition to our high levels of clinical and rehabilitative care, Abbott Terrace also serves our community with the only child day care center, adult day care center, and dedicated program for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in a nursing home in region.

We at Abbott Terrace and within the greater skilled nursing facility community have a deep understanding of the fiscal constraints we are faced with as a state and more specifically within the greater healthcare continuum. We have lived with these constraints for many years and have spent our business and caregiving lives working to deliver a higher and higher quality of care with fewer and fewer resources. However, we are here today to make a clear statement... there is a line beyond which further reductions in funding will ultimately hinder our ability to deliver a continuously improving level of care.

As the Administrator of an extraordinary caregiving team, we have struggled to maintain our front-line staffing levels in the face of ever increasing routine costs and flat if not decreasing revenues. Despite these rising expenses, we as a business continue to search for ways to keep our benefit costs for our staff consistent and provide cost of living adjustments where we can. We do this because we understand the importance of the services we provide to our residents, their families and the city of Waterbury.

I am so grateful to our team. I spend many hours meeting with our direct care staff, discussing their concerns and listening to their struggles to care for a patient case-load that is often younger, more disabled, and more psychosocially needy than what one may perceive nursing home residents to be. The thought of increasing the caseload of our direct caregivers due reduced reimbursements is a scary thought to them. So many of our patients require total assistance with transferring, eating, toileting and dressing, and the amount of time to care for each of these residents seems to always be increasing.

We hear so often that the residents of nursing homes can easily transfer to home and community based settings, but that is not what we see. Not only are so many of these younger disabled folks unable to care for themselves, there are so few options for them to transfer. Our team works tirelessly to meet their needs specific needs, but even then, many are never satisfied. Please help us deliver the high quality care we want to deliver. Please provide us the resources we need to do it.

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