

February 27, 2015

Written testimony of Rachel DeMaida, Administrator at Governor's House Simsbury, CT. 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 Rachel DeMaida and I am the Administrator at Governor's House in Simsbury, CT and I have worked in long term care for fifteen years. Governor's House is a 73 bed skilled nursing facility owned by Genesis HealthCare that offers both long term care and short term rehabilitation. Governor's House is appropriately named as it was the personal home of Connecticut's Governor and U.S. Senator George McLean. The legacy and spirit of Governor McLean's home once called Holly Hill lives on each day in our center as we strive to provide the most compassionate and complete care to our residents.

I am so fortunate to have the opportunity to be here however it's our front line caregivers, the nursing assistants, licensed nurses, dietary aides, cooks, housekeepers, laundry aides, maintenance and recreation staff that truly have made Governor's House a wonderful and therapeutic center for our residents. Over the past eight years, nursing homes have struggled to receive even minimal Medicaid increases yet Governor's House has continued to offer fair wages, benefits and a positive work environment to our caregivers who have the responsibility of providing for their own families. We hope to continue this commitment to our workers but cannot without increases to our daily Medicaid rate. Don't our laborers deserve to have fair wages and benefits to care for their families?

The patients who enter our center are far more medically complex than they were five to 10 years ago. Care needs include IV therapies which are costly and labor intensive or respiratory therapies that have multiple high supply costs. Our bariatric residents require specialized beds, mattresses, walkers, wheelchairs and commodes and these daily rental costs exceed the daily reimbursement. Our frail patients require highly specialized skin care products, wound dressings and ointments,

Our building is a beautiful historic mansion built in 1895 and carefully maintained over the years. With an older building comes the need for multiple capital projects including purchasing boilers, upgrading generator capability, insulating & heating resident areas and ensuring modern provisions for the declining population that we serve.

As I move to conclude, I ask that you consider your parents, aunts & uncles, siblings and grandparents that may have required or may require in the future, care in a skilled nursing center. Think of the tens of thousands of patients that have entrusted their care to Governor's House with the expectation of a comfortable and secure environment. Wouldn't you want them to have the comfort and security of adequate supplies, safe equipment & well trained caregivers? As the Administrator I want to guarantee quality care, equipment and supplies to meet resident needs and adequate well trained staff to provide their daily care needs, however I can't do this without your help and support of current initiatives to increase Medicaid reimbursement.

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