



THE
SUMMIT
AT PLANTSVILLE

A Health Care and Rehabilitation Center

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Written testimony of Ray Wilkens, Administrator, The Summit at Plantsville, 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 Ray Wilkens. I am the administrator at The Summit at Plantsville in Plantsville, Connecticut. The Summit at Plantsville is a longstanding provider of nursing care in the Southington community. We serve the community with 150 skilled nursing beds and over 200 employees. We are the recent recipients of the American Health Care Association tier one recognition for safely reducing the off-label use of antipsychotics. We are contracted with the VA and offer care to many veterans. The facility is an active member of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America.

We all strive to reach the same goal, which is to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes into our facilities.

I was a paramedic for almost 20 years and embarked on a career as an administrator 8 years ago to do my part in changing the perception of nursing homes. Making the care great is becoming more and more challenging as there has been almost no help in the budget for now going on 8 years. Medicaid rates have remained 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 administrator or how I would tell my 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:

- Here at The Summit at Plantsville the needs of our residents are also increasing, the acuity of our residents is so much more complex as our populations ages and hospitals discharge residents sooner into our care. The Money Follows the Person initiative has enabled more patients to stay at home but the residents that come to The Summit at Plantsville truly need to be with us. Their needs are too complex for care at home.
- In this ACO era nursing homes are under higher expectations for increased case management, greater patient education responsibilities, higher expectations on outcomes and the data collection that goes along with this, unfortunately we are unable to add staff to handle this increased work load.
- In addition to these performance standards the trend is lower re-imburement from private insurance, higher patient co-pay/deductible burden (in some cases greater than \$6,000 deductible) which is increasingly difficult to realize and in many cases requires very extended repayment terms negatively affecting the facilities cash flow.
- Skilled nursing facilities are becoming increasingly responsible financially for resident care with exclusions in our contracts shrinking resulting in facilities bearing a greater burden for costly medications and treatment.
- In order for nursing facilities to keep up with expectations of quality and the increased acuity of residents we have to provide extensive training to staff (IV certification, dementia training, behavioral interventions etc) which is very costly.

Nursing facilities are being squeezed from all sides and we desperately need relief. Please help us deliver the high quality care we want to deliver. Please give us the resources we need to do it.

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

Sincerely,

Ray Wilkens

Administrator

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