



February 11, 2016

Written testimony of Marisa Jones, Administrator, Valerie Manor 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 Marisa Jones and I am the Administrator at Valerie Manor Health Care Center in Torrington, Connecticut. Valerie Manor is a longstanding provider of nursing care in the community of Torrington with 151 skilled beds and 250 employees. We have earned a 4 star quality rating through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and are a recipient of recognition from the American Health Care Association for safely reducing hospital readmissions and the off-label use of antipsychotics.

First, I'd like to express how proud I am to be a part of the team at Valerie Manor. As the Administrator, I am not only speaking for myself but also for our devoted caregivers. We all strive to produce the same results and that is to deliver the highest quality of care to anyone who comes to Valerie Manor. These workers and all those currently caring for our most vulnerable population are doing an amazing job, and I am so grateful to them and for everything they do.

Being able to provide the exemplary care every individual deserves has so many challenges and it is only getting harder and harder. The reason it is getting so hard is pretty straightforward---for basically the last 10 years, there has been almost no help in the budget. While the budget proposal doesn't currently have a specific nursing home reduction, if passed as is, it will be a decade of nearly flat funding for our nursing home. The idea that our nursing home could be cut this session because of our state's ongoing financial troubles is devastating and it is beyond my ability to understand how we would be able deliver the care we are committed to providing. I am not sure how I, as the administrator, could implement and communicate the necessity of cutting even more than our flat funding has required over the years.

I would like to express how grateful we are that money was included in last year's budget for our nursing home employees. Acknowledging the critically important job being done every day with wage and benefit increases for our caregivers supports our mission to deliver high quality care for every person residing within our home.

In addition to the important need to monetarily value our workers for the great jobs they are doing, there are many other pressures we are facing. Here are some examples of what we've been up against:

- Costs for food, medical supplies and utilities required to care for our vulnerable population have significantly increased but we are still expected to provide the same high level quality of care
- Individuals are admitting at a higher acuity level. Those that are higher functioning are now returning home and the complex patients with various co-morbidities are being treated in our skilled nursing home
- The expectations of our front line caregivers continue growing while the ability to provide necessary resources remains limited

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

On behalf of everyone at Valerie Manor Health Care Center, thank you for your time and consideration.