



February 11, 2016

***Written testimony of Theresa Sanderson, Administrator, West Hartford Health & Rehabilitation 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 Theresa Sanderson. I am the Administrator at West Hartford Health & Rehabilitation Center in West Hartford, Connecticut. West Hartford Health & Rehabilitation Center is a longstanding provider of nursing care in the community. We have been family owned and operated for 40 years. Our staff turnover is less than 3%. We are home to 160 residents (including a dementia unit) and employ over 200 members of the surrounding community. We are the proud recipient of the American Health Care Association's Silver Quality Award as well as awards for low staff turnover.

But making the care great has so many challenges. Making the care what everyone wants for their loved ones is getting harder and harder. 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 10 years. While the budget proposal doesn't now have a specific nursing home reduction, if passed 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. It is really beyond my ability to understand how we could deliver the care we want to deliver if we were cut.

I do want to say how grateful we are that money was included in last year's budget for our nursing home workers. Acknowledging the critically important being done every day with wage and benefit increases for our caregivers is so important to our mission to deliver high quality care.

But we under so many additional pressures beyond the important need to pay our workers a fair wage for the great jobs they are doing. Here are some examples:

- Our facility had an excellent annual survey this past year and we have had 5 star Quality Measures for several years.
- We measure success by our residents whom we discharge successfully home, return to us when their care needs increase. We are delighted that our repeat customer rate is so high.

- We constantly seek feedback from our residents and staff, and work to implement improvements when we are able. Our resident satisfaction rate has been over 90% for the past 5 years.
- Here at West Hartford Health & Rehabilitation Center the needs of our residents are also increasing. The acuity of our residents is so much more complex. 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 us need to be with us. The needs are too complex for care at home. We are delivering sub-acute, long term and dementia care to the most fragile population in our community.
- The above, combined with increased pressure to reduce hospitalization rates, improve quality measures, and minimize length of stay are putting ever increasing stresses on our resources. We have been, and will continue to strive to be successful. Please help us continue to provide the kind of care we have been delivering to our neighbors in West Hartford.

When Senator Bye visited our facility a few years ago, I was proud to introduce her to the staff and residents and let her see the quality care we are providing to all those who call West Hartford Health & Rehabilitation home. Please help us to continue to deliver the high quality care we have been for the past 40 years.

A handwritten signature, possibly "J. A.", enclosed in a circle, followed by the date "2/11/16".