



February 11, 2016

Written testimony of Linda P. Garcia, Administrator, Beacon Brook Health 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 Linda Garcia. I am Administrator at Beacon Brook Health Center in Naugatuck, Connecticut. Beacon Brook has served the greater Naugatuck area for twenty two years. We are a 126 bed skilled nursing facility with 210 employees. We are a CMS four star facility and have run occupancy close to 98% for the last year.

The staff at Beacon Brook are very dedicated to the Residents they care for, many who have lived with us for several years. We currently have eleven residents over 95 years old and four over 100 years old. We also provide short stay rehab on a very active unit. The staff works hard to meet the varied needs of these populations, coming to work no matter the weather or family obligations.

Acuity for those we serve has increased dramatically. Many Residents have multiple co morbidities and require specialized equipment. We try to provide as much diagnostic work in the facility in order to prevent re-hospitalizations. All of this is costly, and our reimbursement has not changed to reflect this. 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 absolutely devastating. This is contradictory to the expectations of service for our Residents that is expected, by families and you as lawmakers.

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 work being done every day with wage and benefit increases for our caregivers is so important to our mission to deliver high quality care.

We are under so many additional pressures, however, beyond the important need to pay our workers a fair wage for the great jobs they are doing. Our costs keep increasing for food, medical supplies and

medications. Medications alone for Medicare recipients can top several thousand dollars a month. As those we care for come in more acutely ill, after shorter stays in the hospital, the stabilizing and diagnostic process shifts to the skilled nursing centers. We cannot afford to have any cuts to our reimbursement when we struggle to meet the needs now.

Please help us deliver the high quality care we want to deliver.

On behalf of everyone at Beacon Brook Health Center, thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda P. Garcia".

Linda P. Garcia

Administrator