



11 February 2016

Written testimony of Donna C. Orefice, Administrator, Maefair Health Care Center, Trumbull, Connecticut, concerning the Governor's recommended FY 2016 and FY 2017 Proposed Budget.

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Donna Orefice; I am the Administrator of Maefair Health Care Center in Trumbull, Connecticut. Maefair Health Care Center has been providing care to the Trumbull community and the surrounding towns for more than 21 years. Maefair is a 134-bed facility providing long-term care as well as short term rehabilitative care to the Trumbull area. Maefair currently employs more than 250 people across all socio-economic backgrounds. Maefair participates and supports numerous community events in Bridgeport, Shelton, Stratford, and Trumbull, including youth organizations and senior services.

I am proud to be affiliated with this community and am extremely proud of the work our employees offer to our residents. These caregivers present to work each day to deliver the highest quality of care to anyone seeking care at our facility. They do an amazing job, sometimes in the harshest climate situations, and I am very grateful for the job they do.

Great care however creates great challenges. Keeping costs down presents numerous obstacles and it is getting more and more difficult to meet budgetary constraints and address facility upkeep. The reason it is getting more and more difficult is related to the State's budget offering minimal help due to the flat funding for more than 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. Our rate increase for Medicaid recipients this year was \$.07 and last year it was \$.02 (seven cents and two cents). This increase hardly covers the cost of inflation, increase of services, and it doesn't allow for salary increases to employees. It is really beyond my ability to understand how we could deliver the care we want to deliver if additional cuts are made.

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 increases for our caregivers is so important to our mission to deliver high quality care.

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

- Rising Prescription Medication costs
- Increasing food costs
- Utility rate increases

- Increasing acuity of our residents. Maefair Health Care Center accepts residents with more complex diagnoses and co-morbidities who were once cared for in hospitals. Less compromised individuals are now able to receive services in their homes and in less restrictive environments, this is a wonderful opportunity for them but the residents who are now admitted to Maefair are too complex to remain at home and this means an increase to the cost of care.
- We offer a special memory care program for our dementia residents, it allows them to engage with other compromised residents and assures their family members that their loved one is receiving the attention they so deserve.
- We have an excellent rehabilitative staff that is able to return residents to their homes with an average length of stay of 21 days thereby reducing overall costs.

Please help us to continue to deliver the high quality of care we want to deliver and the quality residents deserve.

On behalf of everyone at Maefair Health Care Center, I want to thank you for your commitment to this issue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna C. Orefice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Donna C. Orefice
Administrator