



February 11, 2016

Written testimony of Elizabeth Schmeizl, Administrator, Middlesex 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 Elizabeth Schmeizl. I am the Administrator at Middlesex Health Care Center in Middletown, Connecticut. Middlesex Health Care Center is a longstanding provider of nursing care in Middlesex County. We are a CMS four star rated, skilled nursing facility with 150 beds and 258 employees.

The staff at Middlesex Health Care Center are very dedicated to the Residents they care for, many who have lived with us for several years. We currently have 34 residents over 90 years old and four who are over 100 years old, including one who is 109. 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 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 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

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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 Middlesex Health Care Center, thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Schmeizl".

Elizabeth Schmeizl

Administrator