



Touchpoints at Chestnut

February 11, 2016

Written testimony of Brian K. Nyberg OTR/L; LNHA, Administrator, Touchpoints at Chestnut 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 Brian K. Nyberg. I am Administrator at Touchpoints at Chestnut, a skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility located in East Windsor, Connecticut. Touchpoints at Chestnut is a longstanding provider of skilled nursing care and rehabilitation, providing direct healthcare services to those in need in northern Hartford area. Touchpoints at Chestnut is proud of their CMS 5 star rating, an award and recognition only the top 10% of licensed skilled nursing homes within the state can proclaim. Our facility and staff are honored and proud of this recognition as it is a direct reflection of our quality care, services, resident-centered approach and attention to each resident's individual healthcare needs.

I want to begin by letting you know how proud I am to be here with some of the key people from our facility, staff that are directly involved in the daily care of our residents. I'm the administrator, but these devoted caregivers all have the same values, mission and dedication to our residents. Our goal is to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes to Touchpoints at Chestnut; whether it be for a short term stay following and acute illness or injury or someone who now requires long term care to manage their medical, physical, cognitive or social well-being. Our commitment to individualized resident care, quality outcomes, achieving functional independence and fostering a homelike environment for each of our residents is a value we base our services on each day. We are proud to say that in our last customer service survey, 97% of our residents stated they would recommend our facility to friends and families. Often times, when meeting new residents who come to our facility, they express their interest in coming to our facility was based on recommendations, comments and suggestions from previous residents who had been at our facility for short term nursing care and rehabilitation.

But providing the quality care great and resident centered treatment 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 issues is devastating to our direct care staff who is providing care and impacting their quality of life on a daily basis. It is really beyond my ability to understand how we could deliver the care we want to deliver if our funding remains flat or is even 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 duties and care 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:

- We are continuously trying to explore options to reduce our costs in various service lines, such as food costs, utilities, medical supplies, medical equipment and at times even staffing. Although we do our best to not impact staffing, there is only so much we can do to impact our expenses when it comes to direct supplies, medications, treatments and vital medical equipment our residents require to maintain or promote their optimal health, physical independence and their psychosocial well-being.
- Here at Touchpoints at Chestnut, the needs of our residents has been on the steadily increasing over the last few years. The acuity of our residents is so much more complex as our population's ages and our long term resident's age in place. With the changes in various changes impacting our operations and various healthcare reform changes, a majority of our residents require daily skilled clinical oversight, care and intervention. These residents that come to Touchpoints at Chestnut need to be with us, often times for various clinical care issues and co-morbidities effecting and impacting their ability to return to their prior level of function and or independence in the community. Their various and complex clinical needs are far too complex to be effectively and efficiently cared for in a community home setting or environment.
- Our management team and direct care staff are continuously looking at expense management strategies on a daily basis, all while maintaining our high level of resident centered care, quality outcomes and providing a quality experience during a time which is most often difficult and stressful for both the resident and families. Our facility and staff have a responsibility and take pride in the care and services we offer our community members during their time of need, often times this has been effected by us trying to remain fiscally responsible in order to continue to provide the services we offer. Our costs continue to increase while our funding and reimbursement remains flat or in some instances has been decreased.

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

On behalf of myself and the staff at Touchpoints at Chestnut, I thank you and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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Administrator

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