



Health Care Visions, Inc.

31 Vauxhall Street, New London, CT 06320-5723
A Sub-Acute and Rehabilitative Nursing Facility.
860-442-4363; 860-447-3749

February 11, 2016

Written testimony of Kathryn Lasewicz, Administrator, Beechwood Post-Acute, Transitional and Long Term Care, New London, CT. 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 Kathryn Lasewicz. I am the Administrator at Beechwood Post-Acute, Transitional and Long Term Care in New London, Connecticut. BEECHWOOD has 30 beds dedicated to short term and transitional care. In 2015, over 300 patients were discharged back to their homes or to alternative care. The remaining 30 beds are dedicated to long term care. It has over 100 employees and is a preferred provider for Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, Hartford Health Systems and Yale Health Systems. Beechwood has won many awards such as being a CMS FIVE STAR since 2010, including a FIVE STAR in quality and staffing this year; US News World and Report's Top Nursing Homes 2010-2014; AHCA's Advanced Excellence Bronze Award winner and ACHA's 4 TIER Award winner.

I want to begin by letting you know how proud I am to be here to represent the caregivers from Beechwood. I'm the Administrator, but our employees, these devoted caregivers all want what I want----that is to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes to Beechwood. Our staff of caregivers do an amazing job each and everyday, and I am so grateful to them, and proud of them, for everything they are doing.

But continuing to give the highest quality of care has so many challenges. Making sure we have the resources to give the quality of care and quality of life that 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



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help in the budget for now going on 10 years. Flat while almost all of our costs are going up. If the budget passes 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---even beyond my ability to understand how we could deliver the care we want to deliver. I am not sure how I could implement any cuts as the Administrator or how I would tell my employees or residents that we need to cut even more than our flat funding has required over the years. Flat funding is harmful to Beechwood's CMS Five star rating in quality and staffing, which ultimately affects our residents and employees.

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:

- Medicaid Nursing facility rates have been basically flat since 2007, but costs have been dramatically rising. 2014 brought with it increased costs in property taxes, utilities, FICA and medical costs. An example of those increased costs is our employees medical coverage, which in 2013 was \$195,000 and in 2014 \$233,000 and 2015 \$276,000. Increases that we have not passed on to our employees.
- The patients that Beechwood admits are becoming increasingly complex, with higher acuity needs in both nursing and rehab. A high percentage of these patients are Medicaid patients (only). Since CT Medicaid is not acuity based reimbursement system there was a great disparity in actual cost vs. reimbursement for Beechwood in the past years. A loss of over \$90 dollars per Medicaid patient per day



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was the reality- the flat funding does not cover the care of a Medicaid patient, let alone factor in the acuity and the supplies not covered (e.g. wound vac).

- As the population of Connecticut continues to age the complexity of needs is only going to increase. While there are more options for those with fewer care needs to go home, the residents that come to Beechwood need to be with us. The needs are too complex for care at home.
- We at Beechwood not only manage those complexities, but also become a second home for those that do return to the community (and 70% of our residents return to the community). And for those that do stay with us, Beechwood is their home and our focus is providing them resident centered care in their home to enhance the quality of our residents' lives.

Please help us deliver the high quality care and life we want to deliver. Please give us the resources we need to do it.

On behalf of everyone at Beechwood thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Lasewicz

Kathryn Lasewicz
Administrator