Testimony of Glenn Appel
Director, Luther Ridge of Middletown

Appropriation Committee State Agency Budget Presentations and Public Hearing re Conservation and Development Agencies (HB-7148)
Assisted Living Demo Project Subsidy Program Funding (T-260)
February 27, 2019

Good afternoon members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Glenn Appel and I am the Director of Luther Ridge, a senior living community for moderate and low income seniors in Middletown. I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today and advocate on behalf of those elderly residents who depend on the Assisted Living Demonstration Project offered at Luther Ridge. I am here to testify about my concerns regarding potential State funding changes to this important program.

The Assisted Living Demo Program at Luther Ridge was developed as one of the four State Assisted Living Demonstration Pilots with the goal of saving State Medicaid funds being spent on long term care facilities. Our program offers affordable housing complete with necessary assisted living services to a senior population that simply could not afford these services otherwise. Average age of residents in this program is 87 years old with an average annual income of $23,600. We provide these seniors three meals a day, an onsite wellness center, a social worker to help the resident navigate support services, social opportunities, security, transportation, housekeeping and assistance with bathing, dressing and medication management.

Two examples of the people we serve are as follows:

“Resident A” lived in a skilled nursing facility for 21 months before coming to Luther Ridge through the Money Follows the Person program. A regular apartment in senior housing even with home care would not have met his needs. He needs help with medications, bathing, safety checks, laundry, housekeeping and cueing. This resident had $1,200 in total assets and a $27,000 annual income. Without our Demo program, a skilled nursing facility would be his only option.

“Resident B” had his house condemned and could no longer live safely on his own. He had no local family support, $400 in total assets, and $30,000 per year total income. He needs assistance with medications including insulin, safety checks, bathing, and laundry. He was placed in a nursing home for about a year before coming to Luther Ridge. Aside from our Assisted Living Demonstration Project program, there were no other housing options outside of skilled nursing that would offer enough support and be appropriate for his circumstances.
Both of these residents – and many others - are now thriving at Luther Ridge under our Assisted Living Demonstration program at significantly less cost than their prior - or postponed - nursing home stay.

I can certainly appreciate the difficult choices facing this committee. However, please consider how the Assisted Living Demonstration Project program we offer helps mitigate even greater costs to the State by providing eligible Connecticut residents the housing and supportive services they need to remain in a far more supportive, cost-effective environment then premature placement in a nursing facility. By continuing to provide this program at Luther Ridge, the State at the very least postpones and many times eliminates the need to fund higher cost long-term nursing home care for this population.

In closing, I ask that during your budget deliberations this committee recognize the significant value to the senior individual in need, our community, and the very real net budgetary savings I feel this program provides.

Thank You

Luther Ridge

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