

**Testimony of Karyn Cosgrove
President, Fernwood Rest Home Inc.**

Concerning

*Section 12 of H.B. No. 5020 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS
REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH.*

Public Health Committee Public Hearing, March 6, 2020

Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, Senator Somers, Representative Petit, and Esteemed Members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding Section 12 of House Bill 5020- An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Regarding Public Health.

My name is Karyn Cosgrove and I am the President of Fernwood Rest Home, Inc. Our home is a 68 bed facility located in Litchfield Ct.

I am testifying today to raise my concerns about Section 12 of HB5020 regarding discharges for residential care homes.

There is already a discharge protocol in place for RCHs. They make it more than sufficiently difficult for our homes to discharge a resident. Making it more onerous will have the unintended consequence of homes refusing to admit residents whom they see as having even the slightest possibility of resulting in an involuntary discharge.

Our particular home has one of the lowest State rates and because of non-payment we've had to involuntarily discharge several residents. This isn't anything we ever want to do, and we do everything we can to work with our residents to help them meet their financial obligations: assisting with applications, obtaining necessary documents, transportation to banks, etc. We aren't quick to give a 30-day notice, and we offer our residents a more than lenient payment option for past due rent. Still, we've had residents who have refused to pay their portion of their rent. When this happens, we're already out several month's rent or more if they're working to get entitlements. We've had a situation where the Hearing Judge required us to keep a resident yet another month with instructions that, if after that the resident didn't pay us, she would rule that we could discharge her. The resident didn't pay us; we were out another month's rent, not to mention that we couldn't fill that bed during that time with someone else thereby doubling our loss.

We had a situation where we had a resident who was abusive when he drank. Despite repeated efforts to get him to seek help, he refused so we were forced to give him a 30- day notice. We had been informed that it was our responsibility to get him admitted into a rehabilitation program. All of the programs we contacted made it clear that the resident had to apply himself, and most of them wouldn't have taken him for one reason or another: wrong insurance, medical issues, medications that he was taking. So, until we were finally able to discharge him, our other residents and staff had to endure his foul mouth and temper tantrums.

As most of our residents have mental health issues, and more and more of them have dual-diagnoses as well as medical issues, our job is already difficult. We constantly have to balance

the rights of the one with the rights of the many; the rights of all of our residents and the rights of our staff, not to mention all other stakeholders. We take this very seriously and our residents have recourse to various agencies should they feel they're being treated unfairly. Given all of this, DPH should not be allowed to impose regulations that DSS isn't going to compensate us for! As I've previously stated, we are already grossly underpaid for all that we do for our residents. We cannot bear more regulations without having the funds to hire people to administer them and attorneys to assist us when needed!

Most Sincerely,

Karyn Cosgrove, Pres.
Fernwood Rest Home, Inc.