



ADVANCED

CENTER FOR NURSING & REHABILITATION

February 19, 2020

***Written testimony of Daniel Brencher, Administrator, Advanced Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation,
Concerning the Governor's Recommended FY 2020 and FY 2021 Proposed Budget***

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Daniel Brencher. I am the Administrator at Advanced Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation in New Haven, Connecticut. Advanced Center has been providing nursing home care in our community for generations. We are a 226 bed nursing home employing over 300 individuals.

I want to begin by thanking the Appropriations Committee for supporting wage and benefit increases in last session's budget for our employees. Recruiting and retaining workers in Connecticut's very competitive labor market remains one of our greatest challenges. Having an ample supply of workers to meet the needs of nursing home residents with increasing care needs on all shifts will be even more difficult as the Connecticut minimum wage continues to rise. Please know that these new wage enhancement dollars will help in this ongoing struggle to assure quality care in our nursing home.

In this regard, I want to express my gratitude for the hard work and dedication our employees commit to the residents we care for. I'm the administrator, but these devoted caregivers, from clinical to dietary and housekeeping all want what I want----to have the resources to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes to Advanced Center. These workers are doing an amazing job, and I am proud of them, for everything they are doing.


I fear that our nursing home continues to be at a critical juncture in 2020. Major changes are being developed called "Case Mix" that will change the way Medicaid reimburses our home this year. While we agree with the impetus for Case Mix as a model that reimburses nursing homes based on the care needs of the residents, our nursing home is afraid that the new Case Mix payments will ignore the Medicaid funding shortfalls of the past decade, and that quality will suffer with insufficient resources.

Policy makers need to know delivering the care everyone wants for their loved ones is getting harder and harder to provide in Connecticut. Our employees know this very well. The reason isn't hard to understand--there has been almost no additional Medicaid help in the state budget now for over a decade, but the nursing home population is older and sicker than it was twenty years ago. For example, we see so much more dementia and Alzheimer's disease than ever before. Also, today's nursing home residents also have greater behavioral health needs----mental health and substance use disorders are common on top of the skilled nursing care that today's nursing home residents need. Case Mix could be an answer, but only if the funding shortfall is addressed.

Please help us deliver the care we all want and please make long overdue nursing home funding a priority in this year's budget.

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

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Brencher', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Brencher, LNHA