



February 19, 2020

*Written testimony of Judy Konow-Hinds, Administrator, Chelsea Place Care Center, LLC
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 Judy Konow-Hinds. I am Administrator at Chelsea Place Care Center in Hartford, Connecticut. Chelsea Place is a longstanding provider of skilled care in the community with 234 licensed beds and 300 employees. My facility is managed by iCare Health Network, a Connecticut based company which was established in 2001.

I would like to begin by thanking you for your support in last session's budget. The nursing home wage and benefit increases for our employees were very much appreciated, as we continue to struggle as an industry to recruit and retain staff in a very competitive labor market. Here with me today are many of the hardworking and dedicated employees of Chelsea Place that benefited from that increase. We are here today, once again to ask for your consideration in ensuring adequate funding to nursing homes.

As Connecticut's Medicaid Reimbursement will be drastically changing to "case mix" I am concerned that the current system being developed does not recognize the wide-ranging needs of the Behavioral Health and Substance Use populations that we serve. Chelsea Place, who provides extensive services and programming to these very vulnerable populations, has maintained occupancy rates above 95%. Ninety eight percent (98%) of these residents are on State Medicaid. Other "case mix" states such as Massachusetts have implemented special reimbursement for high occupancy, high Medicaid utilization and Behavioral health to ensure appropriate rates to serve such a complex population. These complicated patients would have longer (and more expensive) hospitalizations were it not for the comprehensive services we provide.



CHELSEA PLACE CARE CENTER

With the Opioid epidemic facing Connecticut and the nation as a whole, Chelsea Place and the iCare Health Network have stepped in as leaders in the state, to address the complex needs of a very vulnerable group of people, who require not only skilled nursing care, but extensive recovery services and psycho-social supports. This group of people, very much like the Behavioral Health population that we have been serving for over 25 years, were staying in the hospitals due to a lack of appropriate discharge locations. We have built an entire program to ensure that we were not only treating the medical needs of the individuals in our care, but taking a holistic approach to treat their substance use disorders, behavioral health needs and psycho-social needs. We have decreased the length of stays in the hospitals, reduced the number of re-hospitalizations and most importantly, we have set our residents up for continued success in their recovery.

The current roll-out of “case mix” reimburses based on the medical needs or “acuity” of the individual, but fails to reimburse for the equally important services provided to address the resident’s addiction, mental health, social, emotional and spiritual needs. At Chelsea Place we provide a case manager, discharge planner, licensed drug and alcohol counselors, Medication Assisted Treatment services, spiritual counselors and additional psychiatric and social work supports to provide for all of the needs of the resident beyond what would be provided in a more typical skilled nursing stay. I would be happy to discuss in more detail the comprehensive services we provide and welcome any questions. I would also encourage you to visit us at Chelsea Place and learn more about these programs.

On behalf of everyone at Chelsea Place Care Center I’d like to thank you for your time today and consideration in this matter.

Judy Konow-Hinds, LHA