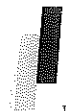


February 21, 2020

Genesis



Written testimony of Diane Thomas, Center Executive Director, Groton Regency Center concerning the Governor's Recommended FY2020 and FY2021 Proposed Budget.

To the members of the Appropriate Committee. My name is Diane Thomas and I am Executive Director at Groton Regency Center in Groton, Connecticut. Groton Regency Center has been providing skilled Nursing Care in our community for 47 years. We are 162 bed skilled nursing facility and we have over 145 employees working at our center.

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

Our devoted staff at Groton Regency include RNs, LPNs, CNAs, social workers, Recreation staff, Administration Staff, Dietary Staff, Maintenance Staff, housekeepers, Laundry workers and Rehab Staff that want what I want which is to deliver the highest of quality care experience to anyone that comes to Groton Regency. I am proud of everything they are doing each day.

The major change in Medicaid reimbursement "Case Mix" has the potential to put our skilled nursing at financial risk. While we agree with Case Mix and how it reimburses nursing homes based on the care needs, or acuity of the residents, our concern is that Case Mix payments will ignore the Medicaid funding shortfalls of the past decade, and the quality will suffer with insufficient resources.

Our elected officials representing our residents, patients and staff need to know that delivering the care everyone wants for their loved one is getting harder and harder to provide in Connecticut. Our employees know this very well. The reason is not hard to understand. There has been almost no additional Medicaid help in the state budget for now over a decade, but the nursing home population is older and sicker than was twenty years ago. We see so much more dementia and Alzheimer's disease than ever before as well as complex social situations that require placement in nursing homes. Today's nursing home resident also have greater behavioral health needs, mental health, as well as substance use disorder. 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 a long overdue nursing home funding a priority in this year's budget. On behalf of Groton Regency thank you. If you have any question please feel free to contact me at (860) 446-9960.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Diane Thomas

Center Executive Director

Groton Regency Center