



February 19, 2020

Written testimony of Ann Jordan, Admissions Director, Vernon Manor Health Care Center 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 Ann Jordan. I have been a Director of Admissions for over 20 years. Vernon Manor is a family owned and operated nursing home which has been providing nursing home care in our community since 1977 (43 years). We are a 120-bed nursing home and we have approximately 180 employees working at our facility. In addition, we accept and discharge nearly 600 patients per year. It takes a lot of work, training and teamwork to have successful outcomes.

I have been a caretaker for my own family member whom I eventually had to place in a nursing home. As a family member, I expected my loved one to receive the highest-level quality of care. When the appropriate care cannot be given because of State nursing home funding, that is where this needs to become a priority as the patient is the one suffering.

I would like to thank the Appropriations Committee for supporting increases in last session's budget for nursing home wage and benefit increases for our employees. Recruiting and retaining workers in Connecticut's very competitive labor market remains one of our major challenges. Having an ample supply of workers to meet the needs of nursing home residents with increasing care needs on all shifts will even be more challenging as the Connecticut minimum wage continue to rise.



In this regard, I want you to know how proud I am to be here to represent Vernon Manor Health Care Center. ALL of our devoted caregivers, from [RNs, LPNs, CNAs, etc...] all want what I want----that is to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes to Vernon Manor. These hard-working individuals are doing an amazing job, and I am so grateful to work with them, and very proud of them, for everything they are doing. Vernon Manor is recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a is a 5-star rated facility.

I fear that our nursing home continues to be at critical juncture, in 2020. Major changes are being developed called “Case Mix” which will change the way Medicaid reimburses our nursing home this year. While we in concept agree with Case Mix and how it reimburses nursing homes base on the care needs, or acuity, 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 really 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 it was twenty years ago. We see so much more dementia and Alzheimer's disease than ever before. 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 quality care we all want and please make long overdue nursing home funding a priority in this year's budget.

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