

**Four Corners Residential Care Home**  
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## **Testimony of Mary Hagerty**

### **Four Corners Rest Home, Inc., Administrator/Owner**

*Re:* H.B. 5055- H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM  
ENDING JUNE 30, 2021

*Concerning*

### **Department of Social Services Budget- Residential Care Home Funding**

Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services Public Hearing, February 19, 2020

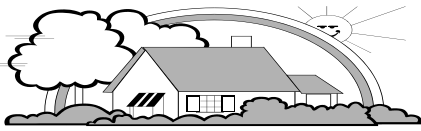
Senator Osten, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony, specifically on the Department of Social Services Budget related to Residential Care Home Funding.

My name is **Mary Hagerty** and I am the **owner and administrator at Four Corners Rest Home, Inc.** located in **Milford**. I am here to express the strong need for a rate increase for residential care homes throughout the state. If our industry continues to be significantly underfunded some homes will inevitably have to close leaving our residents with limited housing options, worsened medical care, and increased mental and physical anguish.

Governor's proposal to enable residential care homes to bill Medicaid acknowledges the need for higher rates. However, our industry has significant concerns with the proposal especially since it cuts money out of the budget that has been dedicated to residential care homes without knowing how much or what services we will be able to have covered by Medicaid. I have concerns regarding the financial struggles and reputation of our industry. There is a lack of respect for our valuable time the we put in for our duties as administrators and some of these hours often require an additional hired position. Our budgets do not cover these costs. Burnout and closure of facilities due to lack of support is occurring, which leaves more unopened beds for residents. Many of the administrators do their own bookkeeping and cost report filing, including audits and amendments, shopping for inventory, cooking, cleaning, and resident care. We have also become "Case Managers" to these residents.

The lack of rate increases is the ability to pay our employees a fair wage. We are taking care of mental health residents every day and that can sometime lead to mental and physical exhaustion. We value our employees who deserve so much more for the work they do for a challenging population. The **minimum wage increase has already** affected our budgets.

Resident care is more demanding and more hands-on assistance is required for our elderly and mentally unstable residents and personal aides are needed. Individuals don't necessarily need and advanced living of care, assisted living or nursing homes for a basic shower and advanced daily living needs. The financial support must be there to provide this care. It is not reasonable that the assisted living facilities are charging such high rates, then discharging these clients to have little funds for these personal care needs. Isn't our goal to put the right resident/patient in the right living environment the first time and ongoing? There should be a better budget for transportation. Many of our residents cannot handle going to appointments and getting personal needs on their own and need more guidance, transportation, and assistance. There should be more case manager to assist from DSS for these needs. It falls on the administrative staff to care manage and provide these services. If a mental health patient doesn't go to the doctor for medication refills, then the will become mentally unstable after missing medication doses... Which in turn causes increased behavioral issues, verbal abuse, bullying,



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outbursts and ongoing instability, which can cause havoc in any facility. Yes, the waiver program is available, but Administrators have one more added duty and time restraint to provide this service. I was told the last time I called for the waiver program that there is a waiting list. I am currently not using these services in my facility, but the need is there.

Our facility is an older building that requires more repairs and upgrades. Credit cards and loans must be taken out with interest for these repairs. It is almost impossible to save for these upgrades, because there is not a profit to be made. Our reputation in the community is very supported and well known. We would like to offer these services to our community. We are the only RCH wit in 15 miles. We have been in business for 48 years. Four Corners Rest Home is an 18-bed facility with 5 private rooms and 6 semi-private rooms. Eighty-nine percent of our residents are on Title 19 and all have a diagnosis with mental illness. Our residents need guidance with bathing, dietary choices, medication management, healthcare management and transportation coordination. Many of our clients cannot handle important decision making or following medical care. May of our residents have had previous or current alcohol or drug addictions. Our ratios are appropriate, but we often need more assistance for the timely care managing of these residents. Bridges Healthcare is our local mental health resource, but even those services are limited.

These concerns for Residential Care Homes and budgeting are for housing mentally challenging individuals under the payment source of Medicaid and little private pay. There is a limited opportunity to profit from this business and expand. Thank you for listening. Please support residential care home funding and uncap our rates so that we can help us keep our great employees and pay them fairer wages, provide a better living environment for our residents in our community.

Respectfully,

Mary Hagerty, RN, BSN  
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