

**Testimony of Dr. Kuldip S Bhogal
High Chase, LLC, Owner / Administrator
April Time, RCH, Owner / Operator**

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 Dr. Kuldip S Bhogal and I am the owner and Administrator at High Chase LLC, in Willington and also the owner and operator at April Time RCH in Manchester. I am concerned that our industry has been vastly underfunded and am, therefore, writing to express the strong need for a rate increase for residential care homes throughout the State. The continuous underfunding of Residential Care Homes will inevitably mean closure of some homes leaving our residents with limited housing options. We are at a point when many homes are already suffering severe cash flow issues.

The 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. We are not familiar with Medicaid billing and this will be an entirely new experience. We will have to employ extra staff with experience in this field and to provide added services that will also mean extra insurance and liability costs.

High Chase caters for 36 residents and April Time 34. All these residents are independent but are unable to exist in the community on their own. We provide full board and lodge and a safe and comfortable environment. We do not have any 'hands on' staff and, therefore, do not provide any help with ADL's. Our staff is trained to supervise medication administration that has reduced home visits by the District Nurses to virtually zero thus save the State millions of dollars every year. By giving medication in a timely manner our residents remain in a more stable state thus reducing hospital admissions substantially. In short, Residential Care Homes provide excellent care to many of our most vulnerable people with mental health diagnoses, physical disability issues and substance abuse issues in a most cost-effective way.

My home and other residential care homes throughout the state have had to get by with rates failing to keep up with costs for the past ten years and yet, unlike other providers, almost all our residents are state funded limiting our ability to cost shift and make up for low rates.

The biggest challenge with the lack of rate increases is the ability to pay our employees a fair wage. We value our employees who deserve so much more for the work they do for a challenging but rewarding population. This job is not for all but for a caring personality. It is a challenge to firstly recruit and then to retain such good staff due to low wages. Although we do provide benefits for this purpose several employees have left for better wages elsewhere. Residential care homes thus have a higher turnover of employees.

Our industry strives to employ people in long term careers so that they can establish and maintain relationships with our residents. This leads to better long-term health outcomes, stability in the home and savings to our state.

The inconsistent funding also makes running our businesses difficult to run. We are constantly having to make repairs that are subject to state inspections. Some of these repairs can be quite costly. Recently we have had to spend over ten thousand dollars to replace a section of our heating boiler that started to leak suddenly. Our generators at both our facilities are old and need replacing. We also need to replace furniture in the resident's rooms that is falling apart at both homes. The list goes on and on!!

We ask you to please support residential care home funding and uncap our rates so that we can retain our great employees, pay them fairer wages and most importantly continue to take care of the most vulnerable section of our society.

DR. KULDIP S BHOGAL

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