

Testimony of Kal Patel
Meadowbrook Manor Administrator

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 Kal Patel and I am the Administrator at Meadowbrook Manor located in Essex. I am here to express the strong need for a rate increase for residential care homes throughout the state. Residential care homes serve some of the most vulnerable residents in the state including residents with mental health diagnoses, substance abuse challenges, the elderly and those with health problems although we are not medical facilities. Over the last decade, our rates have been consistently capped and even in years when we have seen increases, they have been limited to a percent or two failing to keep up with inflation and the new minimum wage requirements enacted last year.

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. How much would be invested back into the industry? How much extra would it cost a home to be a Medicaid biller? Perhaps would any potential increase be offset by the cost associated with being a Medicaid biller?

At Meadowbrook Manor, we provide residence with 24-hour staff supervision, medication administration, housekeeping, breakfast, lunch, dinner, recreation activities and physical plant maintenance to 25 residents for approximately \$95 per day total per resident. The sad truth here is the amount it costs to care for our residents (utilities, employment cost, food, property upkeep and insurance) have gone up over the past few years but our rate has remained almost the same \$95 per day

After years of being flat funded, residential care homes face a critical breaking point. A vast majority of our cost is critical. Amongst the most critical is the cost of our employees. Our employees are tasked with getting medication-certified to administer medications, they are required to clean bathrooms, cook, serve meals, and perform laundry just to name a few of their daily duties.

These tasks are provided by only one or two employees per 8-hour shift for an average pay rate of \$12 - \$15 per hour. We need the ability to pay them more not only to

compete with the increase in the minimum wage but because we need the ability to recruit employees into this important field of service. Most of our funding is from residents on State Supplement so we have the inability to raise revenue by shifting to private pay residents. Our only option is to get relief in our rates.

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.

Kal Patel

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