

APPLE REHAB

West Haven

March 3, 2021

Written testimony of David Bouchard ,Administrator, Apple Rehab West Haven Concerning the Governor's Recommended FY 2022 and FY 2023 Proposed Budget

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is David Bouchard. I am Administrator at Apple Rehab West Haven, in West Haven, Connecticut. Apple Rehab West Haven has been providing nursing home care in our community for 50 years. We are a 90 bed nursing home, and we have 108 employees working at our facility.

Our nursing home, the residents we serve, and our employees, have been challenged like in no other time during the epic and ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency. We were specifically impacted. Our nursing home had outbreaks in March 2020 through July 2020 with direct consequences for are residents and staff: 62 of our residents contracted the virus and 30 staff contracted the virus. While most nursing home residents recovered, we lost 12 residents to the highly contagious and deadly virus. What is especially heartbreaking and tragic is that our staff did all that was in their power to protect our residents. We implemented all the CDC and DPH protocols. We implemented rigorous resident and staff testing when testing became available in the early summer. We secured the PPE we needed and continue searching for supplies from our vendors on a regular basis as supplies in some cases are still difficult to come by and find material at reasonable prices. I am very proud what we were able to do as we were up against a virus that spreading through persons showing no symptoms and in a state that was impacted with challenging rates of community spread of the virus. We faced staffing challenges like never before and we adapted to the severe and emotionally devastating visitor restrictions by facilitating communication and visitors through outdoor, indoor when allowed, compassionate care and virtual visits.

The sustained vigilance of our staff and the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out are now showing us the pathway to the end of this pandemic for our nursing home. Our resident vaccination percentage rate is 80 percent and 45 percent of staff have been vaccinated.

However, the nursing home occupancy decline experienced due to ongoing pandemic has created unprecedented financial consequences to our already underfunded nursing home. Our pre-pandemic occupancy was 93 %. Today occupancy is 75%. We believe we will recover by 2022, but much more support is needed for our threatened to help us get us to the other side of this pandemic. The federal and state support we have received this far, but much more help will be needed in the state budget Connecticut adopts this session. The level funding and severely underfunded acuity-based payment system in the Governor's proposed budget for nursing homes must not be approved. At this critical juncture, a substantial funding increase to our nursing homes is imperative so we can deliver the high-quality care we know everyone wants as we recover from this epic pandemic that has caused so much tragedy for our community.

On behalf of everyone at Apple Rehab West Haven, please substantially increase the funding for our severely threatened Connecticut nursing homes.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Bouchard".

David Bouchard, LNHA