

## Eldercare Services

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**Testimony of Janis Davis, Vice President Eldercare Services  
Sheltering Arms @ United Community & Family Services, Inc.**

Re: H.B. No. 6439- AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

*Concerning*

**Department of Social Services Budget- Residential Care Home Funding**  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services Public Hearing, March 3, 2021

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

My name is Janis Davis and I am the Vice President Eldercare Services at Sheltering Arms located in Norwich. I am here today to raise concerns with the Governor's budget related to residential care homes and express the strong need for a rate increase for residential care homes throughout the state and an increase in wages for our employees.

Sheltering Arms is a 30 bed licensed residential care home, all with private rooms. All of our residents must be over the age of 60 years of age, however the age of our population is mid 70's to mid-90's, with 90% being state funded . All residents are provided 24 hour supervision, medication administration, three meals a day, snacks, recreation activities inside the facility and in the community and laundry services. In addition there is a significant amount of care and coordination of their medical needs, physician appointments and transportation

The biggest challenge with the lack of rate increases is the ability to pay our employees a fair wage. Never has this been more needed then after our workers have put in countless hours of work in a challenging environment for little more than the minimum wage! Our rates have been frozen for over 10+ years. Can you imagine if you had to run your business or household on the same income you had 10 years ago. This is next to impossible.

We value our employees who deserve so much more for the work they do and the amount of responsibility with a challenging but rewarding population. I have seen a commitment to our residents which is beyond compare. The employees have not only quarantine for their own safety but for the safety of the people they care for every day. We have had employees leave during the past year and are not able to fill their positions causing their coworkers to work overtime causing additional expenses to the facility.



Unfortunately, paying our employees the necessary wages to attract new people to our industry continues to be a challenge due to our rate of payment. 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.

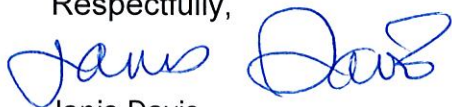
The inconsistent funding also challenges our business operations. We are constantly having to make repairs that are subject to state inspections and staying competitive and yet have virtually no margins to do so.

Staff are frustrated that their peers in the nursing homes have been paid extra dollars and that we are unable to do this since we were not provided any funds to do so. Unlike other providers during the pandemic, we did not see any federal funding to support our work or our employees. 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 since it cuts money out of the state budget. That funding has been dedicated to residential care homes and becoming a Medicaid provider is a significant change to our model of care. We need to ensure that our revenue is not decreased or it will jeopardize the sustainability of my home and ability to care for our residents.

We provide a critical service for the state and care for some of the most vulnerable people. We do this for the low cost of \$117.57 per day to the state. My home and other residential care homes throughout the state have had to get by with rates failing to keep up with costs and yet we serve as the safety net for many people. Unlike other providers, our residents are almost all state funded limiting our ability to cost shift and make up for low rates.

Please support residential care home funding and raise our rates so that we can keep our great employees and pay them fairer wages while they care for some of the most vulnerable in the state.

Respectfully,



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