



## **TESTIMONY**

Submitted by Irene Espin, LPN Complex Care Nurse  
Allumé Home Care

Appropriation Committee - Human Services Budget  
Public Hearing

**March 3, 2021**

### **Regarding the Governor's Budget for Human Services**

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Kushner, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Appropriations Human Services SubCommittee. My name is Irene Espin, I have been an LPN/nurse with Allumé Home Care, a CT home health provider, for the past 2 years.

Allumé Home Care is a CT-licensed and Medicare-accredited home health provider serving 70+ towns with in-home nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, social work, and home health aide services. We specialize in **in-home complex nursing care of technology-dependent, medically fragile** children and adults with tracheostomies, ventilators, g- and j-feeding tubes, and other intensive at-home medical interventions.

I provide direct care for an eight-year-old little boy living in Waterbury with his widowed father and two siblings. My patient has a tracheostomy and is fed with a g-/j-tube. He has seizures and requires respiratory treatments throughout the day and night.

While he is non-verbal, he is an extremely engaging, active, sweet and happy little boy. He enjoys the company of his family and nurses. He has improved a great deal since he first got home from the hospital. He enjoys music and listening to his classmates in online school every day. He loves to be held by his dad, and he absolutely loves his big sister, who is his protector. One of his favorite activities is play time on the floor mat. He moves around and interacts with his toys. I feel honored and blessed to have the opportunity to care for him.

My being there is critical for the livelihood of my patient and his family. Because of the work I do, my patient gets to live at home with his family where he belongs. He gets to go to school, and I also assist him to complete his therapies such as PT and OT. Despite his medical challenges, he has a wonderful, happy life. It breaks my heart to imagine him living in a facility without his family.



My patient's father has been through so much. As a single, widowed father with two additional children, he is able to go to work and support his family because of the nursing care provided. The work I do for my patient and his family is critical.

My patient is authorized to receive 23 hours/day of extended care nursing. Our agency has a great deal of trouble recruiting enough nurses to cover all of his shifts. This is one of the reasons I implore you to please increase the Medicaid rates so my patient has a better chance of receiving more care.

**I am asking the Appropriations Committee to please increase extended care Medicaid Rates.** I love working in home health, and I know my service makes a difference, but nurses in home health should be paid as much as nurses in Skilled Nursing Facilities, doctors offices, or other settings. LPN nurses in other settings are able to make \$10-25/hr more than in home health due to the low Medicaid extended care rates. This isn't right.

In addition to my work at Allumé, I also have another job to make ends meet. **In the facility, I make \$4/hr more than I do in home health**, and there are opportunities where I could make more. I would hate to cut my home health hours or leave the patient for reasons of money.

**Please don't make it hard for me to continue to stay in home health.** I continue to work in home health because I love the work I do, and I deeply care about the patient I serve and his family. I would hate to leave him.

Thank you for considering my request. Increasing extended care Medicaid rates for medically complex children and adults will positively impact hundreds of families in a tremendously positive way.

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