

March 3, 2021



*Written testimony of Marian Gaudioso, Regional Center Executive Director, St Joseph's Nursing and Rehabilitation Center; Genesis Healthcare 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 Marian Gaudioso. I am Regional Center Executive Director at St Joseph's Center Nursing and Rehabilitation in Trumbull, Connecticut. St Joseph's Center has been providing nursing home care in our community for more than 60 years. We are a 269 bed nursing home and have a 23 bed residential care home unit, and we have 290 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 an outbreak beginning in March 2020 with direct consequences for our residents and staff that although not as severe we are still fighting today: In total since March of 2020 we have had 162 residents who we have cared for with the Virus. We have lost 41 residents to this highly contagious and deadly virus. These numbers are comprised of the long term residents in our center from spring of 2020 who contracted the virus and of residents who we admitted to a COVID positive unit in December of 2020 due to the community need to keep our residents and our community safe from the virus. St Joseph's center also had 112 employees contract this virus and fortunately all have recovered. 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 in May of 2020 even before it became available from DPH in the early summer. We secured the PPE we needed and overcame the supply shortages that were present early in the pandemic. I am very proud of what we were able to do, as we were up against a virus that spreading through person to 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. To Date our residents' vaccination percentage rate is 91% and 59% of staff have been vaccinated and more are getting it every day.

However, the nursing home occupancy decline experienced due to ongoing pandemic have created unprecedented financial consequences to our already underfunded nursing home. Our pre-pandemic occupancy was 93%. Today occupancy is 66%. We believe we will recover by 2022, but much more support is needed to help us get us to the other side of this pandemic. The federal and state support we have received this far has been appreciated, but much more help will be needed in the state budget if 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 St Joseph's Center, please substantially increase the funding for our severely threatened Connecticut nursing homes.

Thank you.



Marian Gaudio, LNHA

Regional Center Executive Director

St Joseph's Center - Genesis Healthcare