

March 2, 2021

Written testimony of William E. White, President, Beechwood Post Acute & Transitional Care Concerning the Governor's Recommended FY 2022 and FY 2023 Proposed Budget

Hello Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak and the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Bill White. I am the Administrator and President at Beechwood Post Acute & Transitional Care in New London, Connecticut. Beechwood has been providing nursing home care in our community for over 65 years. We are a 60-bed nursing home, and we have nearly 100 employees working at our facility.

I'm the administrator, but the devoted caregivers I work with, RNs, LPNs, CNAs, etc... all want what I want----that is to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes to Beechwood. And these workers are doing an amazing job, and I am so grateful to them, and proud of them, for everything they are doing. Beechwood is a US News & World Report national quality award winner, consistent winner of multiple "best of" awards, and achieved 5-star status DURING the pandemic.

I am especially proud of the work our nursing home has done during the last year, a year unlike any of us have ever known. We have worked as a team to keep our residents and each other safe. We have passed multiple visits by the Department of Public Health without any violations. Most of all, we have been blessed thus far that none of our residents or staff members has died from COVID. That effort has not been without significant expense - every bit of which was worth it to keep our people safe. We have also seen a dramatic reduction in income, due to occupancy levels reduced by 20%to 25% over prior years. It is combination as a profession that we won't survive without your help.

I am here this evening with a simple message from nursing home operators, and on behalf of our residents and caregivers: *Our nursing facility can't take any more!* Our commitment to our residents never waivers but we are not magicians. We own the burden of providing quality care but there is a corresponding cost that we look to the State of CT to bear the majority portion of. We cannot sustain continued zero percent increases without losing employees and jeopardizing quality and for us, CARE comes first. We are very mindful and understanding of Connecticut's fiscal challenges. But at a time when we need our state government

most to help us maintain the quality of care that we are known for, and that is required of us, we have to speak up and voice our need for help.

I wrote in testimony two years ago that I feared that our nursing home was at a tipping point where we could not go another year without significant and structural Medicaid rate relief. I am here today to tell you we passed that tipping point, we are on the downhill slide, and we need your help to apply the brakes.

Yourselves and your peers, our elected representatives, need to hear loud and clear that delivering the care everyone wants for their loved ones is getting harder and harder to provide. And the reason isn't really hard to understand---there has been almost no additional Medicaid help in the state budget for now over fourteen (14) years. Add to that a system strained beyond the breaking point by the COVID pandemic.

Please help us deliver the care we all want and please make long overdue and ever more urgent nursing home funding a priority in this year's budget.

On behalf of everyone at Beechwood, thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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