



March 5, 2019

Written testimony of Kimberly Carlson, Administrator, Bayview Health Care , Concerning the Governor's Recommended FY 2020 and FY 2021 Proposed Budget

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Kimberly Carlson. I am the Administrator at Bayview Health Care in Waterford, Connecticut. Bayview Health Care has been providing nursing home care in our community for 30 years. We are a 127 bed skilled nursing home to include a 37 bed dementia unit, and we have 245 employees working at our Athena Home.

I want to begin by letting you know how proud I am to be here with some of the key people from Athena Health Care Systems. As the Administrator of Bayview Health Care our mission is to provide the highest quality of life and the highest quality of care for all of our residents no matter what their payer source. We pride ourselves on maintaining a 96% average census due to the excellent care we provide and often need to turn away those due to our full census who need placement in a nursing home. We have additionally partnered with Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London, CT, where we receive 90% of our admissions, to reduce our hospital readmission rates to as low as 2.7% for 7-day readmissions and 17.9% for 30-day readmissions in 2018.

According to data from the CT. gov state website, there were 14 Nursing home closures in 2016 until June of 2018 resulting in a loss of 1, 617 beds. Medicaid being the highest payment source for nursing homes.

If nursing homes are unable to sustain the financial impact of the rising costs of healthcare due to expensive medications, the proposed increase in minimum wage to \$15 per hour, the complexity of clinical care needed including: the rise of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, substance abuse and behavioral health needs. What will happen to those folks who rely on state funded Medicaid as their only payer source to obtain skilled nursing care. Who will care for our families, even for ourselves as we age?

There has been almost no additional Medicaid help in the state budget for now over twelve (12) years. Substantial Medicaid funding is essential to the continued care of our loved ones. Without it more nursing homes will be forced to close. As policy makers it is your responsibility to ensure that nursing homes have the funding needed to provide the skilled nursing care to meet the needs of our ever-growing population. We are at

a critical point where we can't go another year without Connecticut policy makers recognizing that substantial Medicaid help is overdue to assure the quality care we all want to provide.

As a nursing home Administrator, I am passionate about and have a responsibility as do the policy makers to ensure that the needs of our Connecticut residents at large are afforded the opportunity for skilled nursing care.

I implore you to make nursing home funding a priority in this year's budget in order to continue the work of caring for those who require skilled nursing care.

On behalf of all our dedicated staff at Bayview Health Care, thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.