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March 5, 2019

***Written testimony of Lizbeth Carmichael, Administrator of CountrySide Manor of Bristol,
Concerning the Governor's Recommended FY 2020 a, FY 2021 Proposed Budget***

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Lizbeth Carmichael. I am the Administrator, at CountrySide Manor of Bristol, in Bristol, Connecticut. CountrySide Manor of Bristol has been providing nursing home care in our community for over 35 years. We are a 90-bed nursing home, and we have 180 employees working at our facility.

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. I'm the administrator, but these devoted caregivers, RNs, LPNs, CNAs, etc, all want what I want----that is to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes to CountrySide Manor. And these workers are doing an amazing job, I am so grateful to them, and proud of them, for everything they are doing. Our facility prides itself on providing the individualized care to all our residents: either on our dementia unit, long term care or those that rehab with us and go home. Our residents receive the care they need right in our center, which is better for them instead of being admitted to the hospital.

I am especially proud of the work our nursing home has done during a long period where Connecticut hasn't made nursing home funding a priority.

I fear that our nursing home is now at a crossroads. That we are clearly at a 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.

Policy makers and Elected leaders 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 hard to understand---there has been almost no additional Medicaid help in the state budget for



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now over twelve (12) years. Elected leaders need to hear that the nursing home population is older and sicker than it was twenty years ago. We see so much more dementia and Alzheimer's disease than ever before. Today's nursing home residents also have greater behavioral health needs----mental health and substance use disorders are common on top of the skilled nursing care that today's nursing home residents need.

It is really beyond my ability to understand how our nursing home can compete to retain or recruit staff to serve a more complex population with unemployment so low, without more Medicaid help. The minimum wage increases proposed alone will require substantial new Medicaid funding for nursing homes.

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

On behalf of the residents and staff of Countryside Manor of Bristol, thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Lizbeth Carmichael

Administrator