



March 5, 2019

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and to the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Mary Tobin. I am the administrator at Laurel Ridge Health Care Center in Ridgefield, Connecticut. Laurel Ridge has been providing nursing home care in our community for 25 years. We are 126 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 Laurel Ridge. I'm the administrator, but these devoted caregivers, from RNs, LPNs, CNAs, etc., all want what I want--that is to deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who comes to Laurel Ridge. And these workers are doing an amazing job, and I am so grateful to them, and proud of them, for everything they are doing. Laurel Ridge, over the past year, has significantly reduced our hospital readmission rate and length of stay, earning us the distinction of being one of Western CT Health Network's preferred providers.

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 critical juncture. 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.

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 really hard to understand---there has been almost no additional Medicaid help in the state budget for 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 resident 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 everyone at Laurel Ridge, thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Tobin MSW". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Mary Tobin MSW

Administrator