

Good afternoon, Chairperson and members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Maisen and I am the Administrator of Brentwood Nursing Home in Warwick, Rhode Island. I appreciate the opportunity to hear from me today regarding the proposed staffing mandate changes in Budget article 10.

While my support is and always will be leading facilities to providing high quality care to each and every resident, I am here to express my opposition to the current staffing mandate as outlined. While there are positive thoughts within the mandate and its intentions are good, they do not take into account the challenges the sector is facing. The staffing challenges within themselves have put a strain on most if not all facilities in Rhode Island. In terms of patient care times, it is important to understand there are more to these homes than just the clinical nursing care. We have 3 disciplines of therapy that are part of the clinical team and see each resident and are involved in plan of care. We also have activities department that visit with residents and help to engage physically and cognitively, as well as social services. All of these disciplines spend time each day with the residents.

The root cause is not being addressed within the proposal. The shortage of nurses and nursing assistants in the workforce continues to affect nursing care and operations. The labor pool just does not exist in these disciplines. Each facility struggles to recruit and retain qualified nurses and caregivers. Each facility is unique in its own way to cater to specific individual needs. Staffing is and should be based on acuity and individual needs. Fining facilities for not being able to reach this mandate, will force homes to close and have less ability to provide the necessary care that our most vulnerable so desperately need. People do not fully understand the scope and importance of the work done in these facilities until they have to put their loved ones into a facility, or themselves require in-patient care for rehab. We are there to care and support your loved ones when they are at end of life, and also provide support to families struggling during these trying times. These homes all operate within thin margins as most of the revenue to keep the homes open rely on reimbursements from outside agencies that do not fully cover cost of 24/7 care. Addressing the cause of the staffing crisis just makes more sense. I urge this committee to consider alternate solutions. Increased funding for workplace development programs, more incentives for healthcare workers to enter and stay in the field are just some of the ways to help the sector survive. Government and our sector should work together to provide the high-quality care that is expected and needed. It feels at times as if this is a conflict between the two entities and so much more could be done when we all work together.

In conclusion I want to affirm the commitment of myself and all of my fellow nursing home professionals to provide, safe high-quality care for our residents. However, this proposal would do much more harm than good to our industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Matthew Maisen