



September 2, 2020

*Written testimony of Bill White, President, Beechwood Post Acute & Transitional Care – Listening Session of the Public Health, Human Services Appropriations Committees – COVID-19 Connecticut Skilled Nursing Facility Issues*

Good morning Senators Osten, Abrams and Moore, and Representatives Walker, Steinberg and Abercrombie, and to the members of the Appropriations, Public Health and Human Services Committees. My name is Bill White. I am the Administrator and President at Beechwood Post Acute & Transitional Care in New London, Connecticut. Beechwood is family owned and operated and has been providing nursing home care in our community for over 64 years. We are a 60-bed nursing home, and we have nearly 100 employees working at our facility. Thank you for scheduling this listening session and for including skilled nursing facility issues among the COVID-19 topics.

I would like to focus my testimony on the nursing facility occupancy issue we are facing, and how our concerns about our occupancy recovery path ahead present our biggest challenge as we continue to work diligently to get on the other side of this terrible pandemic.

But first I want to talk about where we were in March and where we are now. Though hard work, good fortune, and the support of partners like the CT Departments of Public Health and Social Services, Beechwood has endured through the pandemic. Our resident and staff cases were asymptomatic and were contained. Our PPE supplies have been supplemented and built up so that we remain in a position to fight back. Our staff remain committed to the care of their residents and to the safety of the Beechwood family and of our greater community.

That has not come without cost. During the time period where we have had positive cases in our home the increase in costs has been nothing less than extraordinary, both in staffing and supplies – yet our residents and staff deserve nothing less than every bit of support we can give them. The decrease in revenue due to significantly lower occupancy has been just as extraordinary. The continuing financial support by the State of Connecticut has been critical to maintaining our side of this battle. Direct financial support has helped with

staffing and supplies. The State's ongoing commitment to paying for testing was a huge help in keeping our Beechwood family safe.

The pandemic has taken a dramatic toll on our occupancy. We are optimistic about the steady but slow continuing occupancy recovery. The federal and state support we have received has been critical, but our main concern is that it will run out long before our occupancy recovers. That is not this month or next month. There is no question that a bridge to get us to a sustainable occupancy and revenue level is going to be needed later in the fall and into 2021.

I know several of you personally and you know me to be frank. We need an ongoing level of substantial support, beyond our standard Medicaid rates, if CT nursing homes are to remain solvent and to remain open to care for our most vulnerable citizens.

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