



# MANCHESTER MANOR

*Health Care Center*

HEALTH CENTER FOR ARBORS OF HOP BROOK

**September 2, 2020**

***Written testimony of Paul T. Liistro, CEO and Administrator, Manchester Manor Health Care Center –  
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 Paul T. Liistro. I am ***CEO and Administrator, Manchester Manor Health Care Center*** in Manchester, Connecticut. ***Manchester Manor*** has been providing nursing home care in our community for nearly 60 years. We are a 126-bed nursing home, and we have 175 employees working at our facility. Thank you for scheduling this listening session and for including skilled nursing facility issues among the COVID-19 topics.

We are family owned for nearly 60 years, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ranks us 5 stars in the categories of Overall and Quality Measures; we have had no infection control deficiencies in recent surveys, We participate in all three hospital preferred provider networks. We have high customer satisfaction scores. In short, Manchester Manor is an excellent facility. COVID did not care.

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. What started as a biological pandemic has now morphed into a financial pandemic. Time is measured by the destruction left behind due to the Corona virus. 6 months ago, our occupancy was 92%. Today it is an unsustainable 73%, up from a low of 56%. The LTC industry is much like the airline industry, impacted by expensive fixed costs which require high occupancy to satisfy. Like the staggering layoffs in the aviation industry, the nursing home industry is now shedding thousands of jobs as occupancy so low. 6 months ago, we employed 175 people: today, 125.

Today, our nursing facility has 0 COVID-19 cases, either among employees or residents. In the height of the pandemic, we had 66 Covid patients, nearly one third of our residents were infected. We experienced 22 patient

deaths, 10 times our normal rate. During the period of March to June, we spent \$110,000.00 on PPE. The year before, we spent \$5,000 in 12 months. The picture I paint is that we are a pile of rubble smoldering on the side of the road. We are in desperate shape. WE NEED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO STAY AFLOAT.

Unlike the airlines, the industry Medicaid rates are established by the CT state legislature and are designed to be below our cost of operations. *That's right, below our cost of doing business.* We need financial support for increased staffing, higher pay rates, funds to battle wage compression brought on by the minimum wage, funds for PPE. We are a significant link in the health care continuum serving thousands of Medicaid patients and tens of thousands of Medicare patients annually. Without our level of care, health care expenses for our state's seniors would be catastrophic with patients lingering in very expensive hospitals. Without additional financial support, Connecticut is going to lose a valuable nursing homes to closure.

Our nursing home is a member of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, and our story is not unlike almost all other nursing facilities, and what the operators, residents and caregivers experienced over the last months. However, when the knowledge of how COVID-19 was transmitting became known, and no one understood this in March, when testing became widely available, when we were able to secure adequate PPE, and when we set a successful course of action of infection prevention and control understanding the asymptomatic transmission we turned the corner on eradicating COVID-19 from our building, and it continues to work.

On behalf of everyone, patients, and staff, at Manchester Manor, I thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



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