



THE JEWISH HOME & HOSPITAL LIFECARE SYSTEM

MANHATTAN • BRONX • SARAH NEUMAN CENTER/WESTCHESTER
LIFECARE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Hello, my name is Sonia Stetkiewych and I am the Community Liaison for the Jewish Home and Hospital Manhattan Division. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.

Jewish Home is a LTC provider in Manhattan, Bronx, and Westchester that serves over 10,000 NY elders annually. I have also served as a director of an adult day health program at both The Jewish Home and also at Florence Nightengale which closed in 2005. This closing affected over a thousand people which included clients and staff – that is too many lives and livelihoods being affected. That is the perfect example of why the Governor cannot seek any cuts to Medicaid in the 2008 budget.

There is a lot of data being shared with you today and statistics from other organizations which is the very same for Jewish Home. I refer you to Scott Amrhein's testimony from CCLC.

Right now though I want to share a story about one of our Adult Day clients who I know about first hand. Her life I can say with 100% conviction would be utterly devastated if it not were for Adult Day Programs. Adult Day Programs are Medicaid programs. She and her husband were clients of mine at Florence Nightengale and thankfully were able to transfer to Jewish Home where they are able to continue to thrive. The deciding factor was the availability of continuum of care at Jewish Home. Let me interject that the budget support from the Governor has been critical in keeping the continuum viable. These choices and variety of programs and services is exactly what keeps her family together. It keeps her mental health strong so she is able to be both a caregiver and recipient of care. She has an adult son with special psychiatric needs which is an additional burden on top of her husband's as well as her own medical issues. If they did not have the services, they would not be thriving. The family would be living separately. For this family, and any family, separating from a loving family is not an option nor should it be. In addition to the medical and clinical benefits of the adult day program, she discovered a hidden talent and

passion for art. The art programs have been essential and therapeutic for her as coping mechanism. I can wholeheartedly endorse this because I am trained as an art therapist and could see the positive changes in her in health and outlook. I spent many hours with her watching tears fall from her eyes. Now, she beams with inspiration and enthusiasm for having increased her sense of importance and worth. This in turn allows her to be a good caregiver for her family. Her art was recently chosen to be on our Rosh Hashana cards this year – you can imagine the depth of her pride and boost in confidence!

Please let me drive the point to you that Jewish Home is our elders' home. When staff or services are reduced, whether long term care or community based care because of budget cuts, human lives are affected – not some product like a can of soda. People depend on us to take care of them. They need help to be able to dress, bathe, take medicine and be escorted to social and recreational activities. Can you imagine not being able to perform these activities yourselves? And not having help when you need it? Can you imagine not being able to support your family?

Its time to think of our seniors and frail elders and not just pay attention to the dollar signs.

I thank you for the opportunity to participate in the 2008 budget decision-making process and would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Respectfully submitted,

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