

Town Hall Meeting
SUNY IT, Kunsela Hall Auditorium
Utica, NY
November 27, 2007

Speaker #39 David L Lovelace, Administrator
Adirondack Tri-County Nursing & Rehabilitation Center

I commend the Spitzer Administration for initiating the Town Hall Meeting forum. Thank you for the opportunity to speak for those who provide compassionate care for the frail and elderly. My name is David Lovelace, Administrator at Adirondack Tri-County Nursing & Rehabilitation Center located in North Creek, NY.

Earlier this evening, Paul Francis stated his goal to put a human face on the issues faced in Albany. I intend to put a human face on the issues faced by the elderly.

Other presenters talked about the savings demonstrated by moving to home based services. Wouldn't have been easier for you to have held the Town Hall Meetings in Albany and have us drive to meet with you? You have expended a great deal of energy to host these meetings and travel, for which I thank you. Home Health Care's inherent inefficiencies provide a big challenge.

Health Commissioner Daines spoke at the NYSFA meeting November 13th where he stated regarding a shortage of Home Health Care workers, "Available care gives run out long before the money does." I submit that deinstitutionalizing skilled nursing care to peoples' homes is not a viable solution.

We all know, no one wants to end up in a nursing home, yet five percent do. We have an 82-bed facility with 59 new admissions so far this year. The average age of our residents is 87 and the oldest 103. People are staying at home as long as possible and end up in the nursing home as a last resort.

The fact is people arrive sicker, older, and frailer than years gone by and they don't stay as long as prior years. Residents' care needs are more acute and we are reimbursed just over \$9.00 per hour to provide 24-hour care.

Labor costs comprise more than 72% of our budget. We too are struggling with escalating costs of medical and workers' comp insurance, fuel, and supplies.

Jeffery French, Administrator at Eastern Star Home and Infirmary, stated that it was his privilege to care for the "Greatest Generation" and voiced concern about financial viability of the 33 nursing homes in Oneida County. Statewide over 270 nursing homes have been operating in the red for years.

Our current health care system struggles to meet the long term care needs of the “Greatest Generation,” the generation that survived the Great Depression. These survivors know how to get by with very little. Nationwide over 1.4 million people currently reside in nursing homes and this number is projected to increase to 3 million residents by 2030...with the Baby Boomers. We all can imagine the strain on the system when the Baby Boomers start flexing their strength...and they vote!

Solution

I recommend a shared risk solution...an employer based long term care insurance plan, along the lines of social security. Any thing less and the system will buckle under the demands of the Baby Boomers.

I look forward to working with the Spitzer Administration to facilitate systemic change within long term care and develop funding mechanisms capable of meeting future long term care needs.

Thank you.

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