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Good morning, Chair Romanchuk, Vice Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the committee. I am Diane Liliestedt, the President and COO of Menorah Park Center for Senior Living. I have 25 years of experience in both the for-profit and not-for-profit Nursing Home industry. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss House Bill 33.

Menorah Park Center for Senior Living has two skilled nursing facilities (one being the largest in North East Ohio with 355 beds the other 233 beds), we operate two Assisted Livings, one independent living, Home Care, Hospice, Adult Day Care and an Aquatic Center. Needless to say, we are very interested in this topic.

We all know how closely reimbursement and quality are tied together. If we want to have high quality of care we need to consider the following...

- 1) Rebasng every two years to be competitive with other states and consider inflation in our calculation. We are currently being paid on a rate from 2019, however we have had a pandemic, work force crisis and increased costs in every department. Facilities are drowning in expenses.
- 2) Increase the Medicaid rate in order for facilities to cover the cost of our largest population-Medicaid. In addition, our largest cost which is labor. If we want to provide quality care we need to have quality staff.
- 3) Incentivize for good care - Give dollars for every good score, reward for even the smallest accomplishment.
- 4) Incentivize for Private Rooms-this will help prevent the spread of infections, provides a higher quality of life
- 5) Incentivize for occupancy

It is not a secret that the lack of good staff equals poor care. The agency usage has gotten out of hand. We are paying insane amounts of money for poor workers due to lack of control in this area. Menorah Park was spending 1 million dollars a month to staff the building with agency. This is not a fix; agency workers do not care like your own staff. They do not show up, there are no consequences, they drag everyone else down, play the system and make more money than our own employees who are working hard. We wonder why no one wants to work

in this industry. Maybe one reason is because they are watching others sit around and make double amount of money because we cannot afford to pay our staff. Instead we give our staff bonuses to pick up extra shifts and avoid agency but quite frankly all we are doing is burning our own staff out.

We have 355 residents at Menorah Park and the capacity for 233 at Montefiore. If we cannot afford to continue to operate, who will take care of the residents? We have tried everything including bonus programs, special programs, flexible schedules, med techs. We are out of ideas; our staff is exhausted and need help! The only way to recruit more is to pay them more and to pay them more we need to be fairly reimbursed.

It's very simple, we are not asking for much actually. We are asking that we are reimbursed fairly in order to provide the services needed to our residents. We know that quality of Care comes from good, quality employees that are dedicated and all we want to do is pay them for the work provided. We are willing to earn the money by providing quality care and proving we have done it. We need to be reimbursed fairly in order to afford to pay the incentives we promised during COVID. All we are asking is that we get paid for the care we provide. If we do not make these changes soon our industry will crumble and our residents will not have a safe place with caring people to take care of them.