**CONNECTICUT CONTINUING CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held at Masonicare at Ashlar Village in Wallingford**

**June 16, 2023**

**Attendance**

The following committee members were present: Rich Wysocki, Jonathan Fink, Fred Langhoff, Dolores Szyszko, William Thompson, Maureen Weaver, Kathleen Dess, Peggy Joyce, Keith Robertson, Renee Bernasconi, and Jon Paul Venoit.

Mag Morelli, Chair, was unable to attend the meeting and so Ms. Weaver substituted as Chair.

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Weaver at 10:05 a.m. Ms. Weaver welcomed Ms. Bernasconi, who joined the committee as a Continuing Care at Home Program representative. The committee members and the attending public then introduced themselves.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the April 21, 2023 meeting were approved with a correction made to the section of the minutes reporting on the ConnCCRA Consumer Guide Update.

**Department of Social Services Comments**

Mr. Wysocki reported that there have been no new developments regarding the continuing care model within the Department of Social Services and that no legislative was enacted directly affecting Life Plan Communities/CCRCs.

**Legislative Report**

Ms. Weaver provided a report on the recently adjourned 2023 legislative session highlighting various laws enacted, including workforce provisions to enable licensed practitioners to serve as adjunct faculty and student loan funding for individuals seeking education for licensed health care positions; family councils in managed residential communities; expanded scope of “assisted living services; and transfer of regulatory oversight for homemaker-companion agencies from the Department of Consumer Protection to the Department of Public Health.

**Status of Search for a Client Representative from a “CCRC at Home” Model**

Ms. Weaver reported that Ms. Morelli had not yet identified a proposed client representative from a CCRC at Home Program to join the committee and invited anyone with recommendations to contact Ms. Morelli. The committee had discussed inviting a client to join the committee who is not affiliated with a CCRC already represented through a committee member. Ms. Bernasconi commented that there are only three registered CCRC at Home Programs at this time in Connecticut: Seabury, Whitney Center and Jewish Senior Services (now known as Mozaic). The sense of the committee was that it may be too limiting to exclude consideration of potential client representatives from Whitney Center and Seabury because they already have community representatives on the committee, and it was agreed that client candidates from these communities could be considered.

**Around the Table Updates**

Mr. Fink reported that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services are expected soon to issue national minimum staffing requirements for nursing homes.

Mr. Robertson discussed the challenges of raising capital in the current market and also pointed out that some local banks may no longer be lending due to mergers.

The Committee discussed the increase in senior living communities offering pure rental options and how that impacts the CCRC model.

Ms. Szyszko indicated that there were no updates to report from ConnCCRA but raised the question about whether any CCRCs in Connecticut were experiencing financial difficulties, referencing the news about Friendship Village in Illinois that is currently in chapter 11. Mr. Robertson stated that to his knowledge, no community in Connecticut is teetering on bankruptcy. He explained that bondholders are secured creditors and residents due refunds are unsecured creditors in CCRC bankruptcies, but in every case the bondholders and courts have agreed to make resident refunds a priority over the secured bondholders’ interests.

Kathleen Dess reported that her community has been more successful in hiring but now retention is the primary issue and a discussion resulted about various related challenges including wage inflation and changes in employee work ethics and poor skill sets. Ms. Dess also reported that property insurance premiums were increasing, particularly for Eastern seaboard communities.

Ms. Joyce indicated that Whitney Center has addressed retention by forming a Well-Being Committee to look at the full team member experience at every stage, starting with the application process, hiring and onboarding. Turnover has decreased as a result.

A question was raised as to whether the increased costs discussed are being reflected in entrance fee and monthly fee increases. Keith Robertson indicated that, based on Zeigler’s monthly CFO hotline, the sense is that monthly fee increases are about 3% on average this year, and slightly higher in the northeast but still below overall inflation. Non-profits generally keep fee increases in acceptable ranges and higher increases are seen in the for-profit senior housing rental market.

Bill Thompson and Renee Bernasconi discussed changes in the long-term care insurance market and how that has affected the Seabury Continuing Care at Home Program. A discussion also ensued about the extent to which continuing care at home clients eventually decide to enter communities.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

**Comments from the Public**

The individuals attending the meeting were offered an opportunity to comment during the around the table updates.

**Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting date will be September 8, 2023 at Masonicare Ashlar Village in Wallingford.

**Meeting Adjourned**