

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Waterbury Elected Officials, Faith & Community Leaders Sign Open Letter to Governor and State to Save Abbott Terrace**

*A Bipartisan Coalition of Waterbury leaders is urging the state of Connecticut to Step In*

Waterbury, CT - A bipartisan coalition of Waterbury state legislators, alders, as well as faith and community leaders have sent an Open Letter on Friday (10/18) to Governor Ned Lamont, Department of Social Services Commissioner Andrea Barton-Reeves, Department of Public Health Commissioner Manisha Juthani. The Open Letter is an Urgent Appeal to the Governor and Commissioners for the state to appoint an interim manager to run the facility until CMS can reauthorize payments, and until a new operator can be found to provide Abbott Terrace with a fresh start.

With the closure of Abbott Terrace, Waterbury will have lost 576 skilled nursing home beds since 2018. Since 1995, Waterbury will have lost 926 nursing home beds. If this loss is unimpeded, Waterbury will effectively become a desert of care, with a devastating impact on working families on already-distressed municipalities—with a disproportionate negative impact on black and brown communities.

The closure of Abbott Terrace was initiated by a 30-day notice window on September 11, 2024. Mobilization by a community-faith-labor coalition in allyship with elected officials has extended this window through November 8, 2024. The list of signatories that includes Waterbury state senators, state representatives and city aldermen are included below with the Open Letter.

**About Naugatuck Valley Project (NVP):** Naugatuck Valley Project (NVP) is a community-faith-labor coalition comprised of 24 member organizations representing over 10,000 people, that was established in 1983 to save and create jobs, affordable cooperative housing, and critical public and private services in the Valley.

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Friday, October 18, 2024

Governor Lamont

210 Capitol Ave, Hartford 06106

Commissioner Barton-Reeves

Department of Social Services

55 Farmington Road, Hartford 06105

Commissioner Juthani

Department of Public Health

410 Capitol Ave, Hartford 06134

**Subject: Urgent Appeal to Save Abbott Terrace Health Center**

Dear Governor Lamont, Commissioner Barton-Reeves and Commissioner Juthani,

We, the undersigned, stand united with the residents, staff, and families of Abbott Terrace Health Center. Abbott Terrace has long been a cornerstone of care in Waterbury, serving not only seniors but also individuals with complex needs, such as dementia patients, who are at risk of being displaced far from their families. The emotional toll and logistical burden of moving loved ones to distant facilities is heartbreaking and detrimental to their health. This community relies on these vital services, and because the federal government has taken drastic action to shut this facility down, we are appealing to the state to protect the livelihoods of these workers and the care of their residents that are currently in jeopardy. Waterbury families deserve better.

There are deserts of care in one of the wealthiest states in the nation—stretches of neglect carved out by the elimination of nursing homes in predominantly Black and Brown communities like Bridgeport and Waterbury. Here, residents rely on Medicaid, and their families depend on public transportation and other lifelines to remain close to their loved ones. These communities often need specialized care, like Spanish-only units, and the needs of the community should be considered when facilities are closed. For example, we are asking for protection for the 60 dementia patients who would be uprooted from Abbott Terrace and sent at least 15 miles away due to a lack of available dementia beds in the city.

With the closure of Abbott Terrace, Waterbury will have lost 576 skilled nursing home beds since 2018. It is unacceptable that, at a time when Connecticut has pledged to protect its elderly residents, the state is allowing the shutdown of a facility that plays such a vital role. Meanwhile, multiple nursing home operators, who already manage facilities in Connecticut, have expressed interest in taking over Abbott Terrace. We hope the state seriously considers these potential buyers.

The state must take immediate action to protect the hundreds of dedicated workers at Abbott Terrace, including nurses, housekeepers, CNAs, dietary staff, and laundry workers, whose jobs are at risk. Their livelihoods depend on this facility, and its closure would devastate both the employees and the economic well-being of Waterbury.

The state has committed to making Connecticut a place where residents can grow old with grace and dignity. We’re asking the state to appoint an interim manager to run the facility until CMS can reauthorize payments, a step the state has taken before in similar situations. A new owner could revitalize the facility, improve the quality of care, and keep residents close to their families. Abbott Terrace doesn’t need to close—it needs a fresh start.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

State Sen. Joan Hartley, Chief Deputy President Pro Tempore, 15th Senate District, Waterbury, Middlebury, Naugatuck

State Rep. Geraldo Reyes, Deputy Speaker, 75th House District, Waterbury

State Rep. Larry B. Butler, Deputy Speaker, 72nd House District, Waterbury

State Rep. Ron Napoli Jr., Assistant Majority Leader, 73rd House District, Waterbury

State Rep. Michael DiGiovancarlo, Assistant Majority Leader, 75th House District, President of the Board of Aldermen, District 4, Waterbury

State Rep. Bill Pizzuto, 71st House District, Waterbury & Middlebury

Alderman Christian D’Orso, Majority Leader, District 1, Waterbury

Alderwoman Mary Grace Cavallo, District 1, Waterbury

Alderman Michael Rinaldi, District 1, Waterbury

Alderman Sean Mosley, District 3, Waterbury

Alderman John Aselph, District 5, Waterbury

Alderman Bilal Tajildeen, District 5, Waterbury

Edmund Gadomski, President of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Bishop Lionel French, The Judah Initiative Fellowship Of Churches, Waterbury

Pastor Elizabeth Rosa, Iglesia Cristiana Casa del Perdón, Waterbury

Pastor Yashira Fonseca, Iglesia Casa Ebenezer Tabernáculo de Oración, Waterbury

Reverend Dennis McGuire, First Congregational Church, Waterbury

Father John Cooney, Executive Council member of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Pastor Edwin Evans, Heavenly Hope Ministries, Waterbury

First Lady Diane Evans, Heavenly Hope Ministries, Waterbury

Pastor Latonya Kinsey, New Kingdom Church of Deliverance, Waterbury

Karime Pimentel, CEO/Executive Director of Dominicanos-US, Waterbury

Steve Schrag, Board Chair of ConnectiCOSH

Brenda Morisette, Vice President of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Richard Natale, Executive Council member of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Lourdes Gonzalez, Executive Council member of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Kit Salazar-Smith, Executive Council member of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Jacqueline Bayas, Executive Council member of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Angela Aybar, Executive Council member of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Rob Baril, President SEIU 1199NE

Ed Hawthorne, President AFL-CIO CT

Alexander Kolokotronis, Director of the Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury

Apostle Milton Boyd, Ministries of Faith and Deliverance, Hartford

Reverend Pamela Fairley, True Life Ministries, Hartford

Pastor Samuel Saylor, Gardner Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Springfield MA