

Brookside Assisted Living

225 West Brookside • Colorado Springs, CO 80905 • (719) 632-6511

3/17/17

Cassandra Keller, HCBS Waiver and Benefits Administrator

1570 Grant Street

Denver, CO 80203

Dear Cassandra,

I am writing on behalf of the residents of Brookside Assisted Living. As you know, the costs and challenges of caring for adults with mental illness are significant. These challenges become even more significant when one considers that the cost of food, staffing and utilities continue to increase each year. To assist these adults in becoming thriving and productive members of our community, additional resources are needed to offset these rising costs each year.

Brookside Assisted Living has been and will continue to be a resource for all adults with mental illness in Colorado Springs; however, the facility is in need of additional funding to address the rising costs of caring for this population.

Specific to our population, the cost feeding adults with mental illness are significantly more comparatively speaking in relation to a senior care population. Although they may have a mental illness, the majority of our residents are a younger and more active population with hearty appetites. To ensure they are getting quality, healthy meals we retain a Registered Dietician which many facility don't offer. This also adds cost which we are currently not reimbursed for but continue to offer nevertheless for quality care.

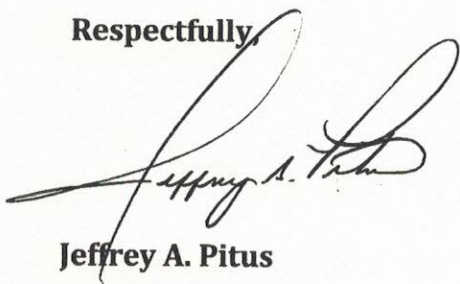
I would also like to mention that many services provided in the past by Aspen Pointe (Formerly Pikes Peak Mental Health) are no longer offered to our residents. Transportation to and from doctor and therapy appointments, day programs, just to name a few have all been placed on us to provide, again, with no added additional funding to maintain these services to our residents.

The immediate need to increase salaries in relation to the state minimum wage increase is significant. Caring for the mental illness population requires a special and unique type of staff member which is compassionate and tolerant of their behaviors. To attract and retain quality staff, the facility must offer higher salaries to employees that specialize in caring for our challenging population.

In perspective, I do not consider the costs to care and enhance the lives of these very special residents to be significant. Especially, if one considers the potential cost to society needed to support them if this level of care did not exist (i.e. nursing home, state hospital). If the current Medicaid funding continues and the increasing costs as stated above are not realized, then communities can anticipate fewer facilities such as ours to provide housing and care for its mental illness population. As you are well aware, there are very few facilities that currently provide services to the mentally ill and in fact many more are needed.

In closing, I understand that state resources are very tight at this time; however, please seriously consider this request. If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to visit our facility and observe our residents with mental illnesses in an environment that promotes health, freedom and happiness and the opportunity to still live a full life. I can guarantee that you will not be disappointed. They are truly wonderful people who are deserving of having these opportunities and services available to them in our community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Pitus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "P".

Jeffrey A. Pitus

Administrator

Brookside Assisted Living

Brookside Assisted Living

Expense Report

2011-2016

<u>Account</u>	<u>Jan – Dec. 2011</u>	<u>Jan – Dec. 2016</u>
Salaries & Wages	\$487,433.27	\$532,955.48
Insurance Expense	\$32,252.46	\$58,970.39
Employee A.C.A Ins.	\$0.00	\$34,213.91
Food and Beverage	\$96,607.72	\$119,030.37
Utilities	\$61,578.07	\$86,098.66
Transportation Expenses	\$4,882.70	\$10,386.15

Martha Rosenau, RD
Peak Nutrition
4 S. Wahsatch Ave.
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

February 11, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

I have served as the contract dietitian for Brookside Assisted Living for 7 years. In that timeframe, I have regularly reviewed, analyzed and revised the 4-week cycle menu to ensure that the residents receive 3 balanced meals a day, plus snacks. The meals are designed to maximize the nutritional status of the residents, tightly control risk factors of common lifestyle disease, and manage weight.

Due to the sedentary nature of this population, along with antipsychotic medication potentially leading to weight gain, my close oversight of food served at Brookside keeps our residents in the best health possible. Our clients also have the opportunity to give input on dishes they would like to see on the menu. So long as the menus remain balanced nutritionally, we do our best to include some of their suggestions.

In a 30-day period, I include one "meal of the month" (residents pick), where the food choices can be higher in fat, sodium or sugar, and lower in fiber than what is usually provided. Otherwise, my role is to ensure that the menus are heavy on nutrient-density (legumes, whole grains, vegetables), include lean meats and lowfat dairy, and offer minimal non-nutritive, high calorie items. The only sweet food or beverage served, are one serving of sugar-sweetened beverage per day (Kool Aid), and one portion-controlled dessert. Otherwise, my goal is to cultivate a broader range of tastes (bitter, savory, umami) on our residents' palates. The medications our clients take for mental illness are known to dampen taste buds.

Additionally, I make sure that vegetables are served at 2 meals per day, and that fruit is offered multiple times per day (snack, breakfast). Our main staple for snack is fresh fruit. My menus are heavy on fresh fruit and vegetables in order to maximize fiber, and vitamins and minerals in the residents' diet. One reason for this is that medications can be constipating. Smart menu design takes into account our residents more sedentary lifestyle and promotes optimal gastrointestinal transit time.


As dietitian, I inspect the kitchen 1-2 times a month to make sure that the food served by staff conforms to what's on the current menus. My inspections also guarantee food safety and kitchen sanitation practices meet or exceed state standards. Seven years ago, Brookside was alerted through physician's chart notes that a handful of our residents were gaining weight. The owner and management of Brookside quickly hired me and I began the process of overhauling the menus. I added fiber and greater nutrient density to offerings, and decreased the overall sodium, fat and sugar content of the meals served. My vision was also to create menus that provide just the right amount and type of dietary fat

(omega-3 fatty acids), an important building block for optimal brain function. Within a few months, the weight gain trend had reversed, and we have never had a concern from a patients' physician ever again.

My presence at Brookside (where the residents and staff know me by name), motivates the kitchen staff to quickly attend to and correct every detail noted in my monthly walk through reports. They know that sanitation and food safety are our highest priorities. Luckily, the kitchen manager and his staff are top notch. They care deeply about our residents' health and well being. Our kitchen manager is also an outstanding cook who can take any lunch or dinner item on the menu, add vegetables to it, and beautifully season it with herbs vs. relying heavily on sodium for added flavor.

I've also been lucky to work for the owner, Chuck Murphy, who shares my vision that food pleasure must be balanced with exceptional physical and mental health through good nutrition. Brookside management is fully aware that sound nutrition reduces behavioral problems. To that end, I create menus that deliver balanced nutrients and promote health and vibrancy.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the Brookside food service mission. I'm always happy to discuss our passion and focus in food service. I can be easily reached at (719) 548-9859.



Martha Rosenau, RD