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March 18, 2010

Michael Gelder  
Executive Office, Department on Aging  
160 North LaSalle, Suite N-700  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Mr. Gelder,

Thank you for your testimony at the City of Chicago Committee on Health meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful for your diligent work on nursing home reform in Illinois.

Because the nursing home industry will stop at nothing to protect their profit margins, I believe that a critical component of the state's reform should be criminalizing and prosecuting nursing home neglect, as well as mandating the loss of licensure when immediate jeopardy is repeatedly found.

I also recommend higher standards and greater accountability for the newly created community care that the state will offer through the Ligas settlement, so that we prevent the promulgation of "shadow" nursing homes owned by slum landlords. The Somerset closing taught us that residents are rightfully wary of community care when it is of poor quality.

Because you are the quarterback of the state's task force to improve nursing home care and safety in Illinois, your testimony is helping the city determine where its efforts should be placed. Thank you again for your kind support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Smith  
MAS/msh