



NEWS RELEASE

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[For more information contact:](#)

David Skoczulek

Vice President of Business Development and Communications

(860) 250-3075 – davids@icarehn.com

DPH Completes Inspection of Fresh River Healthcare with No Deficiencies or Findings Following Public Allegations -- iCare Health Network stands by its staff, residents, and quality of care following controversial press conference

EAST WINDSOR, CT — The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) has completed its on-site inspection of Fresh River Healthcare following allegations raised during a recent press conference organized by State Senator Saud Anwar, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Mairead Painter, and other elected officials. DPH concluded its inspection and conducted a full exit conference with no deficiencies, no regulatory tags, and no findings of noncompliance. There are no open DPH complaints involving the center.

The outcome is particularly significant given the reckless and unsubstantiated public accusations made against Fresh River Healthcare and its staff. Allegations of widespread care problems and unresolved regulatory concerns were presented publicly without advance communication to facility leadership or an opportunity for the organization to investigate and respond.

iCare Health Network strongly disputes the characterization of Fresh River Healthcare presented at the press conference and believes the completed DPH inspection should receive the same attention as the allegations that prompted it.

Fresh River Healthcare serves residents with significant and often highly complex medical, neurological, behavioral health, and long-term care needs. Their care involves difficult clinical circumstances, extensive treatment plans, and ongoing coordination among physicians, nurses, specialists, residents, and families. Individual situations frequently involve important medical details that cannot be publicly disclosed because of resident privacy protections.

"We take every concern about resident care seriously. However, there is considerably more to these situations than can be conveyed in a photograph, a brief account, or a press conference. The state's regulatory agency has now completed its inspection without identifying a single deficiency. We stand by

341 Bidwell Street, Manchester, CT 06040

Tel. 860.570.2140 • Fax. 860.570.2145

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the care provided at Fresh River Healthcare and throughout the iCare Health Network." said David Skoczulek, iCare Health Network's Vice President of Business Development and Communications.

iCare also takes issue with the manner in which these allegations were presented. Facility leadership received no advance communication about the press conference and no opportunity to review or respond to the allegations before they were made public. The organization believes this approach was unfair to residents, families, and the healthcare professionals who care for them every day.

Fresh River Healthcare has worked hard to achieve four- and five-star ratings under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Five-Star Quality Rating System, the established national standard for comparing nursing home performance. While no rating system is perfect, CMS ratings incorporate health inspections, staffing, and quality measures. iCare supports continued improvements to the system but rejects efforts to dismiss established quality measures simply because they do not support a particular public narrative.

The center was also recognized with the 2026 AHCA/NCAL Bronze National Quality Award for its commitment to quality improvement and continues to make substantial investments in specialized care programs, equipment, and its physical environment.

"We respect the important roles of elected officials and resident advocates. We also believe that allegations of wrongdoing should be evaluated through a fair process, with conclusions informed by the findings of the agencies actually responsible for regulatory oversight. We reject the approach taken at this press conference and the suggestion that public accusations should carry greater weight than an actual regulatory review." said iCare CEO Phil Sterling.

iCare Health Network extends its sincere appreciation to the frontline staff at Fresh River Healthcare, many of whom were understandably upset and outraged by the public characterization of their work. The organization also thanks the residents and families who spoke out in support of the center and strongly defended the care they receive.

"Our staff provide demanding, hands-on care every day to people with some of the most challenging healthcare needs. They deserve to have their work fairly represented. We are especially grateful to the residents and families who stood by them during a difficult week." Said iCare CEO Phil Sterling.

iCare Health Network remains committed to transparency, accountability, continuous quality improvement, and the residents and families who place their trust in its care centers.

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About iCare Health Network

iCare Health Network provides management, operating and consulting services to skilled nursing facilities and other healthcare providers. Through its managed care centers and affiliated services, iCare provides skilled nursing, rehabilitation, behavioral health, memory care and other specialized healthcare services in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont.

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