

2712

From: Louise E. Hoffman [leh2@psu.edu]
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2008 12:36 PM
To: Jewett, John H.; Smith, James M.; Kaufman, Kim
Subject: IRRC No. 2712 (or 14-514), proposed regulations on assisted living communities

Dear IRRC director and staff members,

The "contact us by e-mail" link on your agency website won't work, so I'm sending you my comments directly during the public comment period on these proposed regulations for assisted living communities.

This seems to be the only way to submit comments on this proposed set of regulations; the website didn't show a way to post a public comment.

My mother benefited from a wonderful assisted living community in Maryland, and I may well want to live in one myself in the future. Lack of regulation is NO way to ensure quality services and rights for residents! Having investigated the whole industry when my mother was looking for assisted living, I found out more than most in the public.

The IRRC regulations proposed strike me as MINIMAL--the basics needed to start the process. The costs should be encompassed within normal fees for quality assisted living. Prospective residents should have clear explanations of services, costs, their own rights, etc. Without those, a cheaper price would be of little use to them and might even hurt them and their families. Even well-meaning private operators (like the gentleman from the North Ridge Assisted Living Center, whose comments are posted on your website) can wind up unintentionally disadvantaging their residents, without such regulations. We do NOT need another scandal like the that with some "personal care" homes in recent years! Thinking you're acting for the best is nice, but there's no substitute for clear, well-administered regulations, especially when some residents might not have the ability to act effectively for themselves.

The industry is protesting these regulations and associated costs, but I've seen the good quality that results from clear and effective state regulation elsewhere. I am a member of AARP and very much support their advocacy for these regulations. Pennsylvania is behind the curve nationally; I'm grateful to Sen. Vance for taking the initiative on this important issues.

There is a growing population of Pennsylvanians approaching their senior years; please adopt these regulations in OUR interest, not that of an industry that probably would protest any regulation at all. Passage of these regulations could benefit even poor seniors, if the Commonwealth obtains federal approval to spend Medicaid funds on assisted living. This would allow more seniors more choices, and directly counter the industry's argument that the regulations would hurt those on lower incomes. Pennsylvanians deserve to know what they're getting into when they consider assisted living!

Thank you.

Louise Hoffman

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