

2712

RECEIVED

From: fredajoy58@aol.com
Sent: Friday, September 12, 2008 8:11 AM
To: IRRC
Subject: Comment letter on proposed assisted living regulations

2008 SEP 12 AM 10:34

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Gail Weidman
Department of Public Welfare
Office of Long-Term Care Living
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Arthur Coccodrilli, Chair
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market St, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Ms. Weidman and Chairman Coccodrilli:

The proposed assisted living regulations #14-514 do not ensure that Pennsylvania's elderly and persons with disabilities can be safely served in a home-like setting.

The proposed assisted living regulations begin with the personal care home rules and overlay some changes to account for some of the differences between personal care homes and assisted living residences and some of the care needs of the residents they are intended to serve. The changes made thus far are critical and must be, by all means, preserved in the final regulatory package; they alone, however, are not enough to deliver on the promise of safely serving our loved ones in assisted living facilities.

Many more changes must be made to ensure that assisted living facilities are equipped, enabled, and accountable for providing all residents with quality care, provided by appropriate amounts of adequately trained staff, in a home-like setting that is safe, accessible, and stimulating.

Some ways in which the proposed regulations must yet be changed before becoming final rules for assisted living facilities include:

• Adding fundamental consumer protections that all Assisted Living residents and applicants deserve.

• Requiring consumers to have their needs assessed and a full picture of what the facility can or cannot do to meet the consumers' specific assessed needs - along with how much this will cost - prior to moving in to the facility and being made to sign a contract for residency and services.

• Mandating that all direct care staff complete a minimum amount of training hours (no less than the 77 hour core competency curriculum developed by the State Department of Labor and Industry) and be trained in first aid or CPR.

• Requiring all facilities (including buildings that exist as of the day the regulations take effect) to meet the best available standards or practices for fire safety and accessibility.

• Requiring enough direct care staff to ensure that at least 2 hours of care can be delivered to each resident each day but that the actual amount of direct care staffing to be based on the individual needs of the residents.

Requiring all living units to be wheelchair accessible with no less than 250 square feet of living space, with no exceptions.

•
Providing consumers with a right and a process to challenge a facility's decision to kick them out.

•
Assuring the resident has a right to continue to use or otherwise choose their own healthcare providers, such as their doctor or psychiatrist.

My experience is directly with my mom who has Alzheimer's.

She is in a dementia unit that is grossly understaffed. We are paying a mint for the place, and still have to hire 24 hour private duty care for her safety and to maintain a dignified quality of living under the circumstances.

She is one of the lucky ones as she can have this care. Others are suffering neglect due to inadequate staffing numbers, and the inability to pay for extra care.

Thank you for considering my comments on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Freda Locker
785 Main St. #3
Malden, MA 02148

Psssst...Have you heard the news? There's a new fashion blog, plus the latest fall trends and hair styles at StyleList.com.

(<http://www.stylelist.com/trends?ncid=aolsty00050000000014>)