



Housing and Health Care Community

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September 8, 2008

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Kim Kaufman
Executive Director
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

RE: Department of Public Welfare-Assisted Living Regulations,
55Pa. Code Chapter 2800

Dear Ms. Kaufman:

My name is Natalie Tssario and I am a Social Worker at Barnabas Court North, a Personal Care facility, at Brevillier Village in Erie, Pennsylvania. I currently have fifty-five residents under my care with a variety of different needs. A majority of the residents are here due to the fact that they can no longer live alone due to physical or mental impairments. Many of these residents have lived in the Village for several years because we cater to lower income residents. After reading the proposed regulations, I feel that they are very unrealistic for our facility, and others like it.

The regulations state that the square footage requirements should be 175 per living unit for existing facilities and 250 for new facilities. Where do we find the money to reconstruct our existing facility to meet this requirements? Are we suppose to raise our rates to pay for this. We are a non-profit organization serving low-income seniors. Many of these residents have been here for several years and chose our facility because we accept low income residents. If we raise our rent many of our residents would not be able to afford to live here. Where are these residents suppose to go? It would be a shame to ask these residents to move out because they can not afford to live here because the regulations meant to help them. There are not that many facilities in our area who accept residents with low income.

Along with making the rooms bigger, does it really make sense to have a refrigerator, microwave, a sink or even a stovetop in a room with a resident who has dementia.. I can understand having a refrigerator, but the other appliances are accidents waiting to happen! My residents would not know how to operate a microwave or stovetop due to their dementia. This would not only be a danger to them, but also to the other residents and staff in the facility. With three meals a day and snacks available through out the day there is really no need for the extra appliances. In order to add the kitchen area to each room this would also cost money. Adding the kitchen area would raise our rent and it is guaranteed that this

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kitchen area would not be used. With all these room changes, where would we put the residents during the construction? Since the majority of my residents have dementia any change or commotion can cause them to become very agitated.

Another regulation that concerns me is the one to add a fire extinguisher to every living unit. I really do not want any of my residents with dementia to have access to this. With the amount of confusion and agitation with some of my residents fire extinguishers can become very dangerous. Some of the residents when agitated may try and use this against another resident or staff member. Any confused resident may start playing with it and set it off. Put yourself in our position or the position of a family member. If your mother or father were living in a facility and had a diagnosis of dementia, would you want any of these items in their room.

Financially the new regulations are a big concern. If we are suppose to meet the needs of lower-income residents these new regulations would mean those residents would not be able to afford this type of care.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to listen to what are concerns are about the new regulations.

Sincerely,

BREVILLIER VILLAGE

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Natalie Tssario".

Natalie Tssario
Barnabas Court North, Social Worker