



Consumer Groups Form National Alliance to Improve Assisted Living Care

Assisted Living Residents Are At Risk; Consumer Alliance Will Advocate for Reform, and Provide Information for Consumers and Assisted Living Professionals

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WASHINGTON, DC -- October 15, 2007 -- Fifteen elder care, elder law, and senior advocacy groups announced today the formation of the Assisted Living Consumer Alliance. ALCA will be a national non-profit organization advocating for stronger consumer protections for assisted living residents. The ALCA website – www.assistedlivingconsumers.org – provides news and information for both consumers and professionals, including consumer advice and summaries of each state’s assisted living rules.

Unfortunately, most consumers know little about assisted living care. Assisted living standards vary greatly from state to state and usually give a great deal of discretion to individual facilities. Assisted living has received scant attention from the federal government.

Too frequently, assisted living rules and policies are based on the facility’s convenience rather than the residents’ needs and preferences. Assisted living residents are vulnerable to a host of serious problems, ranging from medication mismanagement to inadequate health care to financial or physical abuse. The absence of national standards, combined with uneven state standards, results in consumers often not having adequate recourse when problems occur, even when those problems result in injury or eviction.

Assisted living is the fastest growing type of senior housing. Currently, over one million Americans live in assisted living facilities. Assisted living increasingly is taking the place of nursing home care for many older Americans who no longer are able to live safely on their own due to increased frailty or dementia.

ALCA’s President, Eric Carlson, stated: “Consumer voices are vitally important in making sure that assisted living facilities provide adequate care to their vulnerable residents.” Vice-President Toby S. Edelman added, “Assisted living care is too frequently substandard. ALCA and its members are working for necessary reforms, including appropriate standards and meaningful oversight.”

The fifteen founding members of the Alliance are Bet Tzedek Legal Services of Los Angeles, CA, California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Citizens for Better Care, Coalition of Institutionalized Aged & Disabled, Long Term Care Community Coalition, Michigan Campaign for Quality Care, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, National Association of Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs, National Association of State Ombudsman Programs, NCCNHR (formerly, National Citizens’ Coalition for Nursing Home Reform), National Senior Citizens Law Center, Ohio State Ombudsman Office, Resident Councils of Washington, and the Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

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