Assisted Living Advisory Council (ALAC) Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 25th, 2024
10:00 AM
\*The meeting was held virtually via Zoom\*

ALAC members: Mary Jo Boynton, Brian Danaher, Kimberly Martone, Seth Nadeau, David Santos and Walter Ohanian.
EOEA staff: Matt Casey, Siobhan Coyle, Marie Earnshaw, Liz Gallagher, Trisha Marchetti, Patrick Sullivan and William A. Travascio.

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Matt Casey, EOEA’s General Counsel, chairing the meeting on behalf of EOEA Acting Secretary Robin Lipson.
2. Welcome and Introductions:

Matt Casey thanked members of the Council, stakeholders, and members of the public for attending.
3. Approval of the Minutes:

The draft minutes from the March 26th, 2024, meeting were presented. Brian Danaher suggested three small revisions: two in Section 3 regarding the approval of minutes and one in Section 5 about the Assisted Living in Massachusetts presentation. The minutes from this meeting were approved with five members voting in the affirmative and one member abstaining.

The amended draft minutes from the June 27th, 2023 meeting were also presented for a final vote. The minutes were approved with three members voting in favor and three abstaining.
4. EOEA Updates:

Matt Casey informed the members that Elizabeth Chen has moved on from her role as Secretary of Elder Affairs. Since June 3rd, 2024, Robin Lipson has stepped into the role of Acting Secretary. Robin has many years of experience in state government and healthcare. She has been with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs since 2015, and has held several roles including EOEA’s Chief of Staff, Chief Strategy Officer, and most recently Deputy Secretary. Robin was also Acting Secretary in 2019 after Alice Bonner left.

Governor Healey announced that she filed legislation on May 28th to update our agency’s name from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to the “Executive Office of Aging & Independence” to better represent and reflect the values of older adults in Massachusetts. The proposed name change is part of the agency’s ongoing efforts to expand its reach and ensure older people throughout Massachusetts can access needed information, services, and support through every stage of aging. If you would like to learn more about how the proposed name was selected, please visit our website: mass.gov/elders. If you would like to track the bill’s progress, the bill number is S.2797. It has been referred to the Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight and has a hearing scheduled for May 26th. Until the bill is signed into law, we will continue to operate as EOEA. From a legal standpoint, once the name change takes affect the regulations will need to be updated to reflect the name change.

Matt Casey also introduced Jodi Breidel, EOEA’s new Assistant Secretary of Community Programs.

Trisha Marchetti, Director of Assisted Living Certification and Compliance – EOEA, mentioned the amended assisted living regulations that were issued on March 29th, 2024. The amended regulations include changes to vaccination policies and lessened the requirement for annual physicals. In addition, the waiver extension that went into effect during the COVID-19 pandemic has been extended through to March 31st, 2025. Trisha Marchetti added that the Annual Aggregate Data Report should be available in the coming months, and the next EOEA and ALR network conference call is scheduled for July. She noted that currently there are 271 Assisted Living Residences operating in Massachusetts and that the ALR Certification and Compliance unit is up to date on all site visits.

Trisha Marchetti added that an e-payment system will be going live in July, however ALRs will still be able to mail checks to EOEA’s mailing address. Finally, the new incident reporting system is slightly delayed, but is expected to go live by the end of calendar year 2024. Additional communications, along with information about training, will go out in advance of the platform launching.
5. ALAC Annual Report:

Several Council members thanked the EOEA team for pulling this together and noted the number of topics that were covered over the last year, as well as the amount of work that was done.
6. Industry Updates:

Brian Danaher said that the quarterly calls, as discussed by Trisha Marchetti, have been well received, with executive directors finding them helpful and informative.

Walter Ohanian noted that the unannounced site visits have gone well and that the EOEA certification team has been helpful in educating ALR staff when something is not in compliance.

Brian Doherty, President & CEO of Mass-ALA, thanked Trisha Marchetti and Marie Earnshaw for speaking at Mass-ALA’s annual regulations training. Their session was well attended, with 150 attendees. The state’s Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Carolyn Fenn, as well as the Assisted Living Ombudsman, Steve Ellsweig, also gave remarks. One of their updates is that there are now regional assisted living Ombudsmen. Mass-ALA is now collecting data about regulatory infractions. So far, 50 submissions have been received, covering a wide range of data points from OSHA visits to visits by an Ombudsman or EOEA.

1. Consumer Member Updates:

David Santos asked whether a uniform agency communication form could be developed so that when visiting staff, such as a therapist or nurse, visits a resident, they can provide updates in writing to the Resident Care Director, especially if that person is not available and FaceTime with them is not possible.

Matt Casey felt that while EOEA may not be able to mandate something like this, he looked to the industry to see if there is a way to streamline that-- like the Resident Transfer Coversheet that ALAC reviewed at a previous meeting. Trisha Marchetti said she could ask the Certification and Compliance team about it. She felt that it sounds like an internal operations procedure; it is about how to get the right information to the right person.

1. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 10:31 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 24th, 2024, at 10:00 AM on Zoom.