May 28, 2025

Testimony of Wendy Nowokunski, Northbridge Companies

ALR Commission Hearing

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on my professional and personal experiences with Assisted Living in Massachusetts. My name is Wendy Nowokunski, professionally I am the Co-Founder and President of the Northbridge Companies and Chair of the Massachusetts Assisted Living Association, personally I am the adult daughter of my Dad who lived and thrived in an assisted living community for 7 years until his passing at 93 years old. My Dad was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in his mid 80s, a fall in his home brought him to rehab and ultimately to an assisted living community. In his home his diet had been poor, he wasn’t taking his medication properly, he was on a walker, but most of all he was lonely and struggling with his diagnosis. Within 6 months of moving into assisted living, with a proper diet and medication reminders, the right personal care plan to meet his specific needs- he was no longer using his walker (actually insisting upon using the stairs), he started painting again and literally took over the art studio, and he created a quarterly Journal of Expression where he encouraged other residents and staff to submit stories and artwork to share. I’ve been in senior living for over 30 years and have served thousands of seniors and their families over that time, and have received notes, letters and emails of appreciation for what we do; now that I’ve experienced it with my Dad I cannot tell you how appreciative I am personally and proud professionally that we are able to offer assisted living to seniors and their families .

I know the ALR Commission is seeking input on Resident Satisfaction and Quality of Life. Hopefully my personal story gives you a perspective on quality of life. I might also suggest that you ask the assisted living providers throughout the state about their resident and family satisfaction scores. As with most assisted living providers in the state, we survey our residents and families and our company has consistently achieved 92% + satisfaction year after year.

We look forward to continuing to work with AGE to ensure that the regulations we have in place serve our residents needs and desires- to provide choice, a safe and fulfilling home-like environment, flexibility to provide personalized care based on individual needs and ensuring that staff are well-trained to deliver those particular care and services, and only pay for the support they need.

Thank you again for your time today.