

**Written Testimony by Bodo Liesenfeld to the ALR Commission on Public Hearing May 15<sup>th</sup> 2025**

I'm Bodo Liesenfeld, Co-founder of Anthemion Senior Lifestyles – The Cordwainer, a 61-bed memory care assisted living residence in Norwell, MA.

I would like to speak about the importance of preserving assisted living as a model that promotes resident choice and independence.

The Cordwainer was founded to provide people living with dementia a safe, secure place to live life to the fullest. Based on feedback from our residents and their families, we've created something truly special. One resident, Norma, said:

"I told my children, don't ever take me away from this place. I am so happy here. It's wonderful."

Norma's sentiment is echoed by many who enjoy the supportive care and programs we offer in a home-like setting, with services tailored to each individual's needs.

Assisted living balances safety and support without being institutional. Residents choose this model because:

- They want a warm, home-like environment—not a sterile, impersonal facility.
- They want to preserve their independence and avoid rigid schedules or limited choices.
- They want care that meets them where they are in their aging journey—not one-size-fits-all.

Medical services are provided by third-party healthcare professionals, not by assisted living staff, which clearly separates personal care from medical care.

To preserve the essence of assisted living, regulations must support—not restrict—the flexibility residents need to age with dignity and choice.

Massachusetts' current assisted living regulations, enforced by the Executive Office of Aging & Independence (AGE), provide a thoughtful balance that:

- Protects resident safety,
- Supports operator success, and
- Promotes independence.

The Executive Office of Aging & Independence holds operators to high standards, including:

- A rigorous certification process requiring detailed operations plans, qualified staff, and compliance with fire, building, and safety codes.

Residents are also protected by robust rights to dignity, privacy, and independence, along with oversight from the Assisted Living Ombudsman Program and the Elder Abuse Hotline.

But further regulation risks can do more harm than good:

- Tighter staffing requirements would exacerbate workforce shortages.
- More reporting and mandates would drain resources from resident care to paperwork.
- Higher costs could price out middle-income families or lead to closures.

Over-regulation could push assisted living toward a nursing home model, stripping away the very appeal residents value. I invite you to visit a nursing home and then visit a place like The Cordwainer—you'll immediately see why seniors choose assisted living: not for clinical care, but for community and autonomy.