

# **High standards are key to assisted living facilities**

**by ORLA NUGENT**

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Alissa Halperin's commentary published Aug. 10 left a negative and false impression of assisted living residences in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Assisted Living Association, which professionally manages assisted living and personal care home providers, worked closely with lawmakers to pass Act 56, the landmark legislation setting high standards for assisted living communities. Nothing is more important than the well-being of our seniors, and we have been relentless advocates for high-operating standards and excellence in this industry.

Assisted living communities provide assistance in the activities of daily life so frail seniors can remain independent and in control of their lives and age with dignity, independence and privacy in a homelike setting.

Assisted living is neither a hospital nor a nursing home. Imposing institutional standards upon assisted living threatens to destroy the qualities that make these communities the most popular long-term care option for seniors. The entire premise of Act 56 is based upon the principle that assisted living residences help older people care for themselves. To impose cumbersome conditions that restrict and limit seniors' choices and compromise the quality of their lives is to go against the very intent of the law.

PALA members advocate strong, clear, consistent state regulations and believe the state should punish and shut down deficient operators. Regulators must strike a sensible balance so the high-quality providers can operate and provide services that respect Pennsylvania seniors' rights to live in the least possible restrictive environment.

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