



**TESTIMONY OF JEREMY J. ADLON ON BEHALF OF THE PENNSYLVANIA
ASSISTED LIVING ASSOCIATION**

HOUSE AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2011

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. We appreciate the opportunity to engage in a conversation with you today about our Association, and discuss thoughts on Personal Care Homes and Assisted Living Residences here throughout the Commonwealth.

May it please the committee, my name is Jeremy Adlon and I am the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Assisted Living Association. Joining me today is the Chair of PALA's Public Policy Committee and the CEO of LifeServices Assisted Living (based in Erie, PA) Mr. Timothy W. Coughlin.

Together, we will give you a brief background on the Pennsylvania Assisted Living Association, and discuss at length some key public policy priorities that we feel PALA will engage the Committee on during this legislative session.

Founded in 1995, PALA is the formally designated, state affiliate of the Assisted Living Federation of America (ALFA), which is based in Washington D.C. ALFA is the largest national association exclusively dedicated to professionally operated assisted living communities for seniors.

Here in Pennsylvania, PALA membership consists of over 170 Personal Care Homes and Assisted Living Residences. Included in our membership are the top 5 largest assisted living providers nationally (Atria Senior Living, Brookdale Senior Living, Emeritus Senior Living, Five Star Senior Living, and Sunrise Senior Living.). Along with our public policy priorities, which Mr. Coughlin will address momentarily, PALA also conducts two major Conferences per year, typically attended by approximately 350 housing and care professionals from across the State, along with quarterly educational events for our members.

PALA sees as our mission to provide a unified voice of the Housing and Care Residences we represent and the residents and families they serve by advocating for informed choice, quality care and accessibility for seniors residing in the Commonwealth.

The relationship we have developed with the Department of Public Welfare - Adult Residential Licensing Bureau, Office of Long Term Living and Standing Committees in the House and Senate hopefully position PALA such that we can be helpful to all policymakers in "getting it right" for the 48,000 residents that call our 1,362 housing and care providers, "home".

With this said, I wanted to give a brief background on some statistics regarding Assisted Living and Personal Care Homes here in Pennsylvania, and nationally, that should assist in helping to shape all of our understanding on public policy priorities.

As we all know, Pennsylvania has the second largest senior population in the country and according to the 2010 Annual Report on Licensed Personal Care Homes released by the Department of Public Welfare has 1,362 Licensed Personal Care Homes & Assisted Living Residences throughout the state. Over 50,000 Pennsylvanians work in Licensed Personal Care Homes & Assisted Living Residences, serving 48,000 individuals in these 1,362 Personal Care Homes and Assisted Living Residences.

Additionally, the largest Personal Care Home/Assisted Living Residence in Pennsylvania has a maximum capacity of more than 250 persons, with the average maximum capacity of a Personal Care Home/Assisted Living Residence in Pennsylvania is 50. The average number of persons served at a Personal Care Home/Assisted Living Residence in Pennsylvania is 36. Over 85% of the current personal care home and assisted living residence populations are persons over 65 years of age and 15% are other adults who depend upon our homes for housing and long term care services, too.

Some national statistics, according to data compiled from ALFA, include:

- 1,000,000 seniors live in Assisted Living Residences across the United States
- There are 38,000 licensed Assisted Living Residences in the United States.
- 85 is the average age of a resident in an Assisted Living Residence.
- 27 months is the average length of stay in an Assisted Living Residence.

With these statistics, one can see that Personal Care Homes and Assisted Living Residences come in a wide variety of sizes from small communities in private residences to large multi-campus settings, but, typically, represent “home like settings” for about 30 to 40 seniors who are living together with 24/7 staff. And for PALA as an association, it is important to note that Assisted Living has some of the highest consumer satisfaction ratings among long term care and health care facilities and Assisted Living Residences are less restrictive and more home-like than nursing homes and other institutional settings.

Before I turn our testimony over to Mr. Coughlin, I want to state the important philosophical undertones of both Personal Care Homes and Assisted Living Residences. While both the regulations governing Personal Care Homes and Assisted Living Residences encourage a philosophy of service delivery that promotes independence, privacy, dignity, and choice, the “emphasis” of that philosophy is subtly, but importantly, different in the tone and tenor of these respective regulations. The 2620 regulations were borne of two decades of a time when, largely, small, independently owned personal care home operators were finding increasing numbers of seniors in need of long term care at their front door because they were seeking that care in a residential setting and as an alternative to nursing home placement. And, they were doing so because of the absence of assisted living licensure law that, in hindsight, went on for far, far, too long in the Commonwealth. Our personal care home providers largely rose to that care challenge, but the Commonwealth, while still not yet enacting assisted living licensure law, also

became understandably concerned about the increasing acuity in personal care environments. In response, they both amended the personal care home regulations and began imposing regulatory “interpretations” on providers in order to “keep people safe.” Finally, with your Committee contributing leadership, we enacted historic legislation, designated as Act 56, to create this higher level of care we call “Assisted Living”. And, we collectively “got it right” in that this Law, in addition to setting a number of important clinical standards appropriate to this level of care, emphasizes a philosophy that older people are quite capable of making their own choices as to how they live their life, if properly informed and educated as to their options, and assisted living residences have a duty of care to, not so much, “take care of older people”, but rather, “help older people take care of themselves.” This legislation is a great “cure” to our currently complicated situation, but we still have a lot of work to do in “sorting out” these two distinct levels of care. That work requires caution and deliberation as it affects the life of 50,000 seniors, ten of thousands of more Pa. seniors over time, and currently the 1,362 providers and 50,000 caregivers who depend upon their businesses and employment for a livelihood.

The goal, while ambitious, is achievable and PALA looks forward to working with the Committee during this upcoming legislative session on several objectives aligned with this goal.

I would like to now turn our testimony over to Mr. Coughlin, who will discuss PALA’s Public Policy priorities, which include, but are not limited to the topics of Act 56, the pending Statement of Policy regarding Fire Safety, and a number of circumstances surrounding our new assisted living licensure regulations and their implementation.