

Favorable: SB0794 Behavioral Health Programs – Residential Programs – Food Service Facility

Good afternoon – my name is Richard Renshaw, and I own two small Board & Care Homes. (“Small” is defined as 16 beds or less.) The kitchens look very much like what you’d see in a typical house.



Assisted Living is one example type of Board & Care Home, and residential treatment of Substance Use Disorder is another.

According to current state regulations (for small homes), one of these two examples is allowed to have a typical residential kitchen, and all other types are required to have an elaborate & expensive commercial kitchen (like you would see in a large institutional setting). I know what you’re thinking: Assisted living has a more vulnerable – elderly – population, so it must have the more stringent requirement, right?

Not so. Assisted living is the only type that is currently exempted from commercial kitchen requirements... but it didn’t use to be that way. Up until a few years ago, all Board & Care Homes were under the Office of Health Care Quality... but then MDH reorganized and created the Behavioral Health Administration. Residential SUD treatment went under the BHA, and the kitchen exemption failed to be copied over in the new regulations. And that’s an inconsistency that needs to be fixed. You see, my two homes were perfectly acceptable when they were used for assisted living. However, the same buildings, licensed for the same number of beds, are suddenly not acceptable for residential SUD.

Unduly Burdened

As you can imagine, the cost of a commercial kitchen in a small home would be exorbitant. It’s even worse when considering it as a retrofit. The existing residential kitchen would need to be gutted & replaced, including appliances, countertops, flooring, plumbing, possibly structural framing, etc. (if it will even fit).

- This situation would severely disrupt the treatment program.
- It would be a waste of resources that could otherwise be applied to other aspects of the program.
- Furthermore, it could even become cost-prohibitive.
- At the very least, it would destroy the extra-comforting environment of a ***small*** home, which is desperately needed by so many people suffering from addiction.

As the owner of Palmetto Corner residential treatment, I urge you to vote ‘yes’ to this bill. Thank you.