

## **Testimony in Support of HB1291 from George Carroll**

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To: Finance Committee Chair Joseline A Pena-Melnyk

Chairman Pena-Melnyk thank you for this opportunity to voice my support for this bill.

Assisted Living Facilities are not nursing homes. They are for residents that need some help with activities of daily living. This fit my mother Rachel's needs.

She did not want to live with one of her children, to be a burden. Her desire to be independent except for a little assistance made assisted living an attractive option.

As time went on there were operational problems at the facility that needed to be addressed. The family council we formed helped improve the quality of life of all residents of the facility, improved communication, reduced the work of the county ombudsman, and avoided litigation. It was a win-win situation.

There were dozens of problems our family council addressed. Some examples follow:

- 1) The facility did not have the proper equipment to evacuate residents on the second and third floors in case of a fire.
- 2) The assisted living manager insisted on locking the public restrooms on the ground floor next to the dining hall to deny the residents access to them. Visitors could obtain a key from the front desk, but residents were told to use the toilet in their rooms.
- 3) Adult diapers we purchased for Rachel were routinely used by the staff for other residents.

- 4) Despite a written order from Rachel's dentist to have the staff help her with brushing her teeth, this was rarely done.
- 5) Rachel was blind in one eye, so it was important that she had help putting on her eyeglasses every morning. Often when we would join her for lunch, her glasses were missing or on another resident's face.
- 6) We marked all her clothing with her name, but the laundry service managed to distribute her clothing to many other residents.
- 7) Rachel was a modest woman, and was not comfortable having a male nurse assist her with showering.
- 8) More than once, there was an outbreak of legionnaire's disease in the facility, causing the residents to go without working showers for over 3 weeks
- 9) There were insufficient staff to meet the needs of the residents, and many of the staff were not certified CNA or GNA workers.
- 10) Waitressing duties in the dining room were provided by the same employees that changed diapers.

11) Feces on toilets were not always promptly cleaned up. I observed during a fruit fly infestation fruit flies flying from feces on the toilet to food being served, to a resident's mouth and nose.

Our family council gave the family members of the residents a structure and a voice in addressing these and other issues at the facilities. I believe many of Maryland's 16,000 + Assisted Living residents could benefit from having a family council at their facility.

Finally, the family council working with the facility will reduce costs for the facility, the State, and the potential for litigation. Family Councils are a winner for all concerned. I support HB1291.