

Telling Our Story Together on Beacon Hill and Capitol Hill

Q1, March 2024

Dear Members,

We had three important events in March, working together with members as the Voice of assisted living. I invite you to be a part of this advocacy going forward. Our Assisted Living Advocacy Day at the State House had many successful outcomes. Elder Affairs Committee Chairs Senator Patricia Jehlen and Representative Tom Stanley spoke to assisted living staff, residents, and family members about their work on assisted living and other issues impacting older adults. Mass-ALA Board Chair Wendy Nowokunski shared personal stories of how assisted living improved her father's well-being and brought him joy and purpose. She shared how others could relate their experiences to illustrate the importance of assisted living in conversations with elected officials. There were 17 office visits with legislators and staff of the Health Care Financing and Elder Affairs Committees, at which Mass-ALA members educated legislators about the important work they do and advocated for changes to increase services and access to assisted living. State House News Service, which reports on state issues and is syndicated in many local and regional papers, issued a positive in-depth report about Advocacy Day and the issues we were shining a light on.

Our legislative brochure, which we gave to legislators and staff, is available [here](#). Another opportunity to be the voice of assisted living was the Argentum Public Policy Institute in Washington D.C. Mass-ALA members and staff met with 10 Senate and Congressional offices from the Massachusetts delegation. We educated these influential legislators and staff at the federal level about the impact of assisted living and how access could be increased for more veterans and low-income individuals. We also advocated for legislation that would enable more

cross-generational programming in assisted living. The highlight of the meetings for many of us was when we were proud to have Wendy Nowokunski introduce Congresswoman Lori Trahan, who provided remarks to Argentum Institute attendees about her introduction of the [SENIOR Act](#), which would address workforce challenges in assisted living through increasing access for providers to utilize existing federal workforce programs.



Another opportunity for Mass-ALA members to be the Voice of assisted living occurred at the Assisted Living Advisory Council meeting on March 26. The EOEA Secretary chairs the Assisted Living Advisory Council, which includes appointed members such as consumers, industry representatives, and state officials. The Council advises EOEA on regulations. Matt Salmon, CEO of Salmon Health and Retirement and Brian Danaher, V.P. & Deputy General Counsel of Benchmark Senior Living presented at the invitation of Secretary Chen. They updated the Council and guests about how the assisted living regulations work well to allow for a wide range of consumer choice in a home-like environment. They offered

insights into how regulations work well as intended, areas that could be updated for improvements, and the practical aspects of how the balance of regulations and flexibility serves residents well. It is important for policymakers to hear from providers about how policies are put into practice, and how changes would impact residents and families.

Please be a part of our advocacy and be the Voice of assisted living with us! If you're interested in being more involved in these issues, you can apply to join our Public Policy Committee, by emailing Liz Picardi at lpicardi@mass-ala.org And please watch for promotions of opportunities like Mass-ALA's Assisted Living Advocacy Day and Argentum's Public Policy Institute, and register or promote them to colleagues, to help us build these events to have greater participation so we can have strength in numbers. Thank you for your continued membership and participation. It truly does make a difference.



Brian Doherty
President and CEO
Mass-ALA