

Dear ALF Work Group Members:

I want to welcome you to Phase II of the Governor's Work Group on Assisted Living. The Work Group was able to cover a lot of ground during the three Phase I meetings in the summer and fall of 2011. The Phase I Work Group report included over 60 recommendations supported by a majority of the Work Group members.

Most of these recommendations were incorporated into Legislative proposals for consideration by the 2012 Legislature. The Legislative session ended, however, before legislators were able to reach an agreement on and pass an Assisted Living bill. The work of the Phase I Work Group remains available as an essential resource for any future considerations by the Legislature of Florida's Assisted Living policy and regulatory frameworks.

In addition to the issues addressed and recommendations generated during Phase I, the Work Group had to leave a lot on the table to be addressed during Phase 2. So much, in fact, that I do not think we can get to all of it with a three meeting, three month calendar this summer. So, I have tried to identify the issues that I think may have the highest priority based upon what I remember of our discussions last fall and on discussions with AHCA staff (Secretary Dudek, Molly McKinstry and her colleagues) and Jane Johnson in the Governor's Office.

Phase II Priorities:

1. I think most of us would agree that the first priority should be the many mental health related issues that were raised during Phase 1, but left largely unresolved in that we voted on few mental health policy recommendations. The entire Phase 2 agenda could be devoted to mental health assisted living issues, but I suggest that the Work Group identify a subset of the most important issues and include them on a mental health agenda for the third and final meeting of the Work Group in August. This will be a two day meeting.
2. The second priority is incorporated in the agenda and attachments for the first meeting on June 25 and includes the issues related to enforcement, facility information reporting, including consumer information and multiple regulators (organizational infrastructure for regulation).
3. A third set of priorities covers the issues related to administrative qualifications, licensure (mainly examination of the need for the current array of license types), resident admission and discharge, resident safety and rights and staffing ratio issues. Enforcement initiatives taken by AHCA and other agencies over the past several months will be described during the agency presentation part of the June 25th agenda.

Work Group members may have other issues they would like to place on the Phase 2 agenda. The issues identified above, however, will probably require all of the time we will have to address fully, so, any new issues should be expected to meet a high standard before being added to the Phase 2 agenda.

The Phase 2 Work Group should benefit considerably from the work done during Phase 1 to identify the major issues for the Phase 2 agenda. The Phase 1 initiative should allow the Phase 2 Work Group to move at a faster pace than we did last fall and make the three meeting calendar manageable even with an ambitious agenda.

The most important resource we have, of course, in making our work manageable is the outstanding support provided by the AHCA staff and the Governor's office.

The deliberations of the Work Group will, I hope, be assisted by the availability in June of an extensively updated and reorganized literature review and policy analysis paper.

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