

President and CEO's Update: Brian Doherty

Meeting the Needs and Advocating for Assisted Living Providers: Both Small and Large

Dear Mass-ALA Members,

In everything we do at Mass-ALA, we are attuned to the differences in needs between small and large member providers. One of our strengths as an organization is that we have 89 percent of certified residences in Massachusetts as active members. Mass-ALA represents assisted living residences with as few as 6 and as many as 150 units. And we represent many management companies that manage one single residence as well as companies that manage dozens of residences.

That strength of diversity of membership profiles also presents challenges that we are sensitive to and plan and act in accordance with so that we can serve all types of residences and management companies. For example, we have members who work at all types of assisted living companies on our [Board of Directors](#), from large, local providers that have a large number of residences in the state, to providers that serve low-income populations, to large national providers, to medium-sized companies with business in other areas on the senior living continuum of care.

An interesting difference I've seen among management companies is that smaller companies tell us that our education and training is the most valuable service of Mass-ALA and larger companies tell us that our legislative and regulatory advocacy is our most valuable service. Given that difference in priorities, I was delighted that our Board of Directors came to a consensus that our top strategic goal would be *"to enhance the quality and scope of educational programs, services, and information"*. All of us involved with Mass-ALA recognized the on-going need to improve education and training that helps the entire industry provide outstanding care and services to their residents.

Mass-ALA has successfully threaded the needle of serving the diverse needs of members, as evidenced by a wide range of attendees at our Bootcamps, Annual Conference, Nurses Training, and Regulations Training. Still, we can do better. And we recognize that doing better may mean offering programs that sometimes appeal more to smaller operators or to larger operators. As we explore the needs of our members and what training and education is in demand that Mass-ALA should provide, we may offer trainings that some companies already provide "in-house" but other residences identify as a need that they are not currently meeting.

Our advocacy agenda demonstrates that we are leading the industry in ways that will help both small and large providers. One of our top priorities is the Common Sense Health Services bill, which would allow residences that choose to and are certified to by EOEA, to provide injections, wound care, oxygen management, and eye drops and ointments to residents. Some residences would choose to provide these services by their own staff and others would choose to instead allow visiting nurses to provide such care, so that both large and small companies are able to meet the needs of their residents in the ways that are best for them.

Another top priority is to have a Medicaid waiver for residential Medicaid eligible older adults to choose assisted living residences when those are preferable to them and meet their needs. The waiver would primarily help the most affordable providers but would also help all residences to meet occupancy challenges and allow residents to age in residences that best fit their changing needs.

One of the strengths of assisted living as an industry is that we have a flexible array of choices for older adults and the model of both large and small companies and residences which helps in providing these diverse options. Mass-ALA is committed to continuing to be sensitive to that, and to provide exceptional value and services to our members of all types.

Brian Doherty, CAE
President and CEO

