

**OHIO HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION
ASSISTED LIVING BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES**

June 16, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

Assisted Living Board Vice-Chair Amy Francis called the meeting to order and welcomed board members to the meeting. She pointed to the combined antitrust, compliance and confidentiality policies included in the resources for the meeting in the online folder. Board members Gwynn Ryder and Amy Francis approved the April meeting minutes. Attendance can be found at the bottom of this document.

Pete Van Runkle opened the meeting introducing the new team member, Tammy Cassidy, who would be serving as the new Regulatory Director. He then provided an update on the current status of the state budget. The House and Senate have passed their versions, and a conference committee has been set up to reconcile the differences. Two public hearings will be held. One on June 17 to hear revenue projections, and another in late June to announce the final conference report. He indicated that we do not expect to see increases in state revenues from the reports, as we have experienced in past years. that assisted living rate increases and rate review processes were not included in the budget due to its austere nature. The legislature aims to cut income tax rates, creating a flat tax for most earners. Despite the tight budget, previous provider rate increases were maintained. The personal needs allowance for assisted living residents remains a point of difference between the House and Senate versions, which will be addressed in the conference committee.

Mr. Van Runkle also discusses updates on the quality navigator and resident satisfaction surveys. The quality navigator's provider questionnaire and quiz for directing people to assisted living or skilled nursing have raised concerns. We have shared with the department that we feel it inappropriately pushes residents to a SNF setting. He is working with state officials to address these issues, suggesting replacing the quiz with information explaining differences between SNFs and ALs. Regarding satisfaction surveys, they will now combine resident and family surveys annually, with results announced twice a year. The department also indicated that they changed some of the questions to make them less confusing. The surveys will start in late August, and guides for providers on using survey results will be produced. A stakeholder advisory committee will be formed for ongoing feedback.

Ms Hart briefly mentioned the deadline for the survey to maintain Critical Access Rate approval. Assisted living providers who are currently contracted to bill for the critical access rate are required to respond to ODA's annual June survey (attestation and CAR tool). To maintain HIPAA compliance, the attestation and CAR tool need to be uploaded to ShareFile. Please email Meredith Finley at mfinley@age.ohio.gov the name (first and last) and email address of the person who will upload the documentation to ShareFile by June 20, 2025.

Without this information you will not be able to submit your attestation and CAR tool and will not be approved to bill for the rate during the next state fiscal year.

Erin Hart discusses delays in level of care assessments at area agencies on aging, particularly for community residents. The board explores potential solutions, including a shared caseworker program, an expedition fee, and a desk review option with physician certification. Members express concerns about the imbalance created by paid expeditions and the disparity in regulatory enforcement between providers and state agencies. Ms. Hart plans to develop a proposal based on the home health model using physician certification for desk reviews.

Debbie Jenkins provides an update on the federal Budget Reconciliation Bill and its potential impact on Ohio's Medicaid funding. The House version includes concerning provisions regarding provider taxes and managed care waivers, which could result in a \$5-6 billion reduction in Ohio's Medicaid budget. While July 4th is the target date for finalizing the bill, some Congressional offices suggest August as a more realistic deadline. OHCA staff have been advocating in DC to educate Ohio's Congressional offices about the potential impacts. The group continues to monitor the situation closely, particularly the timeline of both state and federal budgets, and will update members as new information becomes available. Ms. Jenkins also briefly mentions the CMS Minimum Staffing rule, as SNF staffing requirements can have an impact on the availability of staff for assisted living providers. She notes that the federal government appealed the courts' ruling, but only to include the funds as a pay-for during federal reconciliation.

Mr. Van Runkle reports on the group's responses to various Requests for Information (RFIs) from federal agencies, including suggestions for regulatory changes in assisted living. He also provides an update on QALC (Quality in Assisted Living Collaborative), mentioning their work on guidelines for assisted living, including emergency preparedness. He notes some disagreement within QALC about the scope of future topics to address, with NCAL taking a more conservative approach.

The board discusses appointing a new State leader for NCAL, but due to the absence of Gwynn Ryder and lack of a quorum, they decide to send an email poll to board members. Ms. Hart then provides updates on the launch of a documentary, People Worth Caring About, and the related promotional campaigns and workbooks for HR personnel and students to promote long-term care careers. She also mentions the closing of the certification scholarship application period and congratulates the assisted living facilities that received bronze awards in the AHCA/NCAL Quality Awards. The meeting concludes with a brief discussion on survey activity, noting that surveyors are significantly behind schedule.

Next meeting: August 18, 2025, 12:00 p.m. Zoom

Attendance:

Tammy Cassidy
Amy Francis
Erin Hart
Debbie Jenkins
Charlotte Kister
Matthew Pool
Gwynn Ryder
Kyle Schmidlapp
Pete Van Runkle