

Subject: Proposed Changes to Assisted Living Facility Rules

Dear Shanah,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to share a set of proposed changes to the current rules governing assisted living facilities. The goal is to enhance operational efficiency while reducing unnecessary restrictions and compliance burdens, which often hinder the growth of these essential facilities.

These suggestions are grounded in the belief that high standards for resident care and safety can coexist with streamlined processes that minimize administrative overhead. Specifically, the proposed changes focus on:

- Simplifying documentation and reporting requirements.
- Introducing more flexible, outcome-based regulations.
- Modernizing building and environmental standards.
- Refining emergency preparedness requirements to eliminate redundancy.

These recommendations address common operational challenges while ensuring compliance with core safety and quality standards. By adopting these changes, facilities can dedicate more time and resources to resident care rather than navigating overly prescriptive regulations.

In particular, streamlining the rules for family care homes is critical to support their growth and scalability. These facilities are in high demand, yet heavy regulations and zoning requirements create significant barriers for operators seeking to expand—even those with proven track records of delivering high-quality care. Simplified and flexible regulations would reduce administrative burdens, lower operational costs, and make it more feasible for capable providers to establish new homes. This approach not only meets the increasing need for family care homes but also enables experienced operators to scale their services effectively while maintaining resident safety and well-being.

I would greatly appreciate your review of these proposals and welcome any insights or feedback you may have. I am happy to provide additional context or discuss these ideas further at your convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

General Suggestions

1. Simplify Documentation and Reporting Requirements:

- Reduce duplication in documentation by consolidating records like fire drills, disaster plans, and assessments into a unified digital system.
- Use a state-wide electronic submission portal to streamline compliance reporting.

2. Adopt Flexibility in Physical Plant Requirements:

- Allow equivalency options that do not compromise resident safety but accommodate innovative designs or unique circumstances (e.g., paragraph modifications in 10A NCAC 13G .0301).
- Remove the requirement to meet outdated standards (e.g., 1971 rules) if modern codes are more suitable.

3. Prioritize Outcome-Based Regulations:

- Focus on measurable outcomes like resident satisfaction, health metrics, and incident reduction rather than prescriptive physical and operational standards.

4. Rethink Emergency Preparedness Planning:

- Consolidate fire and disaster planning into a single integrated emergency plan to reduce redundancy.
- Allow facilities flexibility in implementing locally suitable safety measures, with standardized templates provided to reduce administrative burdens.

Specific Recommendations

Staffing

1. Flexible Training Standards:

- Offer online or hybrid training options for staff to meet requirements outlined in Rule 13G .0317.
- Provide guidance on prioritizing training content to emphasize practical skills over theoretical knowledge.

2. Tailored Staffing Plans:

- Adjust staffing levels to reflect the specific needs of residents rather than blanket ratios.

Building and Safety Requirements

1. Streamline Renovation Approval:

- Simplify the process for approval of renovations (e.g., 10A NCAC 13G .0302), requiring fewer reviews unless safety is compromised.
- Allow facilities to submit digital blueprints or photos for minor updates rather than full architectural plans.

2. Modernize Environmental Requirements:

- Relax overly specific mandates (e.g., 30 foot-candles of light) to general guidelines ensuring sufficient lighting and resident comfort.

3. Utility Management:

- Reevaluate rules on temperature maintenance to balance resident comfort with energy efficiency.

Care Planning and Resident Needs

1. Digitize Care Plans:

- Utilize centralized systems for care plans to improve accessibility for staff and reduce duplication.

2. Flexible Care Models:

- Allow for care plan adjustments in real-time without excessive re-approval processes.

3. Resident-Centered Policies:

- Increase autonomy by allowing residents more say in how care plans are structured (e.g., include personal preferences prominently).

Compliance and Inspections

1. Risk-Based Inspections:

- Reduce inspection frequency for facilities with a history of compliance.
- Focus inspections on high-risk areas like fire safety and resident care.

2. Advisory Reviews:

- Offer non-punitive, consultative visits to help facilities meet compliance in a collaborative way.

Best regards,

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