

INTRODUCING

Assisted Living

As the long-term care environment evolves, you may find yourself speaking to a completely new audience. You're already talking about your community, the services you offer, and the seniors you serve. But are you talking about Assisted Living as a model of care?

Educating the general public, policymakers, and health care providers about Assisted Living can be challenging, but it is not unmanageable. Think of it like an introduction between two people at a party—as the host, you know they will get along. The key is to deliver a clear, concise, and consistent message about the philosophy behind this model of care and how Assisted Living can meet a range of needs. When speaking with a new audience, whether it is a physician or hospital discharge planner, a local chamber of commerce or service organization, or anyone interested in aging issues, introduce Assisted Living by touching upon each of the following points.

For more information on these tools, visit the CALA website, www.CAassistedliving.org.

WHAT Assisted Living is

It's important to distinguish Assisted Living from other senior housing options, describe its non-institutional, home-like atmosphere, and note the benefits of the variety available. CALA's "Assisted Living in California" fact sheet can help you deliver this message. The fact sheet describes Assisted Living as a consumer-driven model of care which promotes independence and serves seniors who don't need around-the-clock medical care. It also discusses the history of Assisted Living and how it differs from other senior care options. You can download the fact sheet from the "About CALA" webpage.

Assisted Living emerged as a response to consumer demand for a long-term services and supports option that was less restrictive, residential rather than institutional, and would meet the everyday needs of seniors who can't live alone.
From "Assisted Living in California"

Not everyone knows what an ADL is, or the difference between medication management and medication assistance. When talking with someone just learning about Assisted Living, you should take the opportunity to explain the types of services that are generally provided. CALA's *Choosing Assisted Living* brochure is a wonderful tool for doing just that. The brochure, which is available on the CALA website for purchase in packs of 25, outlines the restricted and prohibited conditions, common services available, and services which require additional regulations or waivers such as hospice and dementia care.

WHO Assisted Living cares for

...licensed, residential settings where care and support are provided, including: Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs); Meals; Medication management (caregivers can assist with self-administration); Activities; Housekeeping; Supportive services; Safe living environment...
From *Choosing Assisted Living*

Even though Assisted Living doesn't provide medical care, it's important to note that it is regulated and inspected by the California Department of Social Services (DSS). No need to get into the nitty-gritty of Title 22, but you can share that the laws and regulations are there to ensure quality care for California's seniors. If you're speaking specifically with policymakers, refer to CALA's position paper, "California's Highly Regulated Assisted Living Communities Could Be Strengthened by More Frequent Licensing Inspections." This paper, which briefly outlines Title 22 and the different types of inspections that communities are subject to, is especially helpful when speaking with legislators and their staff.

Assisted Living communities...are highly regulated with a robust body of laws and regulations governing the care and services provided, the training that staff receive, and the physical environment in which the services are offered.
From "California's Highly Regulated Assisted Living Communities Could Be Strengthened by More Frequent Licensing Inspections"

HOW Assisted Living is regulated

Assisted Living providers don't just help their residents with ADLs—they can also give support to family members and act as a source of expertise when it comes to aging issues. Let your audience know that you can help with common issues and concerns by accessing CALA's *Voice of Assisted Living* speech series, available for members on the CALA website. With topics like "Dementia and Its Growing Impact," "Dispelling Myths About Aging," and "Stresses, Joys of Caregiving," these pre-written speeches can guide you as you deliver this important message.

I'm here, first, to celebrate those who provide support to our seniors and to recognize the sacrifices they make. Caregivers are the unsung heroes of our day, and their contributions frequently go unnoticed. However, I also want to urge them to understand and manage the process carefully.
From "Stresses, Joys of Caregiving"

HOW Assisted Living can help with aging issues

You do the extraordinary each day: you care for your community's seniors, create jobs for your area, and may even benefit the community-at-large by participating in volunteer or advocacy efforts. Now that you've explained each of the important points above, take a moment to brag a little and share what makes your community unique. If you're looking for a platform to reach a wider audience, send your good news stories to CALA to be posted on the CALA blog, *The Hearth*. With an average monthly readership of over 400 and growing, *The Hearth* can help you show how Assisted Living benefits the state and its seniors.

HOW Assisted Living benefits your community

It is a wonderful time to celebrate the employees and residents that make up your community. But "community" also extends beyond the front door—your community-at-large may include volunteers from an area school, local businesses and service providers which support your residents, and family members near and far.
From "Connect with Your Community During Assisted Living Week," *The Hearth*