

Hello U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

My name is Maria Sands and I am Resident Care Director with Shrewsbury Crossings/Benchmark Senior Living.

I am writing today to express my concern regarding the draft of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease. I stand with the Assisted Living Federation of America and the Alzheimer's Association in their call to include assisted living communities in this discussion. Assisted living communities play a vital role in the lives of memory impaired residents. The omission of assisted living is completely unacceptable. Below are the changes/additions that we want to see included in the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease.

- We request that the word "patient" used throughout the document be changed to "individual" or "resident". While we understand that someone under a physician's orders is called a patient, individuals residing in assisted living and other home and community based options are referred to as individuals or residents.
- Please add "licensed assisted living communities" to the list of settings throughout the document
- In Goal 3: Change the title to Expand Support of Individuals with Alzheimer's and their Families.
- In Strategy 3. D The use of the term "residential care facilities" in the first sentence is odd because that term has never been used throughout the document. A more consistent term could be "long term care settings." In two places the term "assisted living facilities" is used and the term "facilities" should be replaced with "communities". This strategy should be strengthened to support a zero tolerance for abuse of individual's with Alzheimer's, regardless of where they live. Criminal background checks, educating family members, residents and staff in how to recognize respond and report suspected abuse and termination of staff when appropriate must be a top priority.

As we all work together to fight this terrible disease, I eagerly anticipate the revised National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease. Please do the right thing and include assisted living communities.

Sincerely,

 Maria Sands RN, BSN, IZCD