



Residents News-Mail

January 5, 2021
President's Letter

Dear WACCRA Members,
Happy New Year to each of you. Even as I write on this gray dreary day, when major rainfall is expected, I feel hope that the vaccine, masks, and social distancing and our innate tenacity will get us through the final stretch of this doom and gloom. We'll be able to see friends and family in person and enjoy all that society and nature affords us. Residents will be able to congregate in the halls, break bread together in our dining rooms, and entertain in our apartments. Laughter will ring out. Music will be shared. And the WACCRA Board will be able to convene monthly at our CCRCs and greet members in person. Life will be better!

Looking ahead to 2021, the WACCRA Board has a solid list of priorities for the year.

1. The Board will monitor and help, whenever needed, to institute the "Commitment to CCRC Practices" at the twenty-two CCRCs where the Practices have been agreed to and signed by Management. Already, a joint letter from the LeadingAge Executive Director and me has gone to each of the executive directors who signed the Practices along with a suggested set of PowerPoint slides introducing the Practices. The Board will be interested in learning how the Practices are introduced at each CCRC. We welcome your feedback on how the Practices are making a difference where you live.
2. The mediation between LeadingAge, CCRC executive directors, and WACCRA will continue. The next topic is to develop a conflict resolution program to address disputes between management and residents in Independent Living.

3. The WACCRA Website, found at www.waccra.org, is undergoing a transformation. Still in the development phase, the new site will provide more information and be organized in a user-friendly manner. At present, Board Members are reviewing the new and existing components for readability and understanding. You'll be learning more about this process and the final result in future WACCRA News-Mails.

4. The Board continues to emphasize growing our membership. Numbers count, especially at the Legislature. When our membership renewal and new member drive begin next month, we hope you'll be among the first to re-up and also encourage your CCRC friends to join. Our new family membership has been a hit, and if you have not already considered it, please do. It's only \$5 per family member; our kids can now learn about CCRC life and issues of concern from the WACCRA mailings.

5. WACCRA continues to be your voice in Olympia and Washington, D.C. As such, we will continue to track legislation and regulations that support or detract from senior living. Word will go out with a request for your help when lobbying is needed; please be on the lookout. Our lobbyist, Donna Christensen, is on the ground in Olympia and meeting with legislators on our behalf. At present, she is meeting new members of the legislature and laying out our interests and concerns. Her specific focus is on the members of the committees that address our issues: the House Health Care and Wellness Committee and the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee. Both Committees continue to be chaired by friends of WACCRA: Representative Eileen Cody in the House and Senator Annette Cleveland in the Senate. Other WACCRA champions, Representative Nicole Macri and Senator Manka Dhingra, who have sponsored our legislation and are stalwart supporters, remain on these committees.

I also want to share with you WACCRA's accomplishments during 2020. Even though the WACCRA Board worked mostly via Zoom and phone calls, 2020 was a year of substantial achievement. Before the arrival of Covid 19, the mediation between LeadingAge and WACCRA had completed much of its important work. A negotiated agreement, "Commitment to CCRC Practices," was signed by all but one of the State's twenty-three CCRC executive directors. With some caveats the agreement (1) provides residents with actuarial information to evaluate a CCRC's future financial stability; (2) insures that holders of refund contracts signed after January 1, 2021 receive payment of their refund within two years of leaving the CCRC; (3) provides for resident involvement when "major changes in procedures or services, policy decisions, and major financial decisions including investment policy decisions made by the community" are under consideration; and (4) requires that the document be

available to all residents in the same place as other available management documents. The Practices represent a major step forward in working collaboratively with LeadingAge and CCRC Execs.

Another achievement this year was defeating the proposal to raise the federal tax on Washington CCRC skilled nursing residents by \$8,000 per resident per year. The WACCRA Board sent out a clarion call, and our members went to work writing the Washington Congressional Delegation to defeat this proposal by the Medicare Administrator. As one member wrote, "This defeat was worth far more than the price of WACCRA membership. Thank you."

While residents in Independent Living (who are the vast majority of WACCRA membership) don't have much access to the State's Long Term Care Ombudsman, except when moving to a different level of care, we recognize the importance of the Ombuds' functions. To that end, we lobbied strenuously in the State Legislature that monies taken from the Ombuds' Office in error be returned along with the regularly budgeted funds. That effort, too, was successful.

These efforts in 2020 were led by Rick Baugh, WACCRA's immediate past president. We owe him a lot for his leadership and vision. Thanks, Rick, for all you've done and will continue to do for WACCRA.

On behalf of the Board, I also want to thank Ed Hanson. Ed served as WACCRA's secretary and has completed his term on the Board. We know he will continue to be a WACCRA supporter and stay active at Timber Ridge.

Lastly, I send out thanks and best wishes to all of our members. Your support is critical to the achievements we make. You rally when your voices are needed in Olympia or Washington, D.C. We can count on your activism which is the only way our organization works. Together, we make a positive difference in our own lives and the lives of other CCRC residents. What a team!

Cheers,

Donna Kristaponis

WACCRA President

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