

ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2628

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 23, 1997

The Assembly Health Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2628.

This bill requires that community residences for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders be licensed as assisted living residences by the Department of Health and Senior Services.

The bill defines "Alzheimer's disease and related disorders" as a form of dementia characterized by a general loss of intellectual abilities of sufficient severity to interfere with social or occupational functioning.

The bill also stipulates that these community residences do not fall under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Department of Human Services, unlike community residences for persons with developmental disabilities, mental illness or head injury.

This bill is intended to ensure that persons with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders receive community-based care in the most appropriate setting consistent with their needs. The bill is premised on the assumption that these persons are better suited to a health care facility environment, rather than a group home setting. Persons with Alzheimer's disease, which is a terminal organic brain disease that accounts for an estimated 60 percent of all dementia cases and is the fourth leading cause of death among adults, are confronted with a different situation than other kinds of group home residents in that they face the prospect of continued deterioration of their mental condition over time and require special care to slow their rate of deterioration as much as possible, and thereby defer their admission to a nursing home for as long as possible.

Assisted living residences are residential facilities licensed by the Department of Health and Senior Services to provide a personally furnished, apartment-style living environment that offers congregate dining along with a package of assisted living services, including nursing and personal care provided by a sponsor agency, which are individualized and designed to promote the resident's sense of autonomy, privacy and self-esteem.

This bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 1782 (McNamara/Bassano), which is currently pending in the Senate Senior Citizens, Veterans' Affairs and Human Services Committee.