

# Letters to the Editor

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THE READERS' FORUM

## Create state ranking system for ALFs

Hopefully the series, *Neglected to death*, which uncovered cases of senior abuse in assisted-living facilities (ALF), educated readers about the need for research and education when selecting an ALF for a family member.

The neglectful and criminal practices that the articles described occurred in a relatively few and isolated instances, and most examples cited were smaller ALFs, many of which lack the staffing, financing, infrastructure and ancillary support to provide the environment necessary for seniors to thrive.

The vast majority of Florida's ALFs ensure resident safety, care and well-being as an integral part of their services. They have systems in place to constantly monitor resident welfare and interaction with staff members who are rigidly pre-screened prior to employment not only for lack of criminal background, but also for sensitive personality to caring for aging adults.


To assist consumers in making more informed decisions, we suggest that the state implement a ranking system for ALFs similar to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Five-Star Quality Rating, which assesses a nursing home's overall rating, health inspections, quality measures and staff. It's been an invaluable tool for comparing nursing homes and summarizes information into an easy-to-understand rating system.

Third-party accreditation by independent organizations may also serve our industry well. The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) is one such accreditation that ensures providers meet internationally recognized standards.

ALFs can be a great option for seniors and their families, who often times are unable to provide the necessary care within their own homes. They are places where seniors can lead a vibrant lifestyle, age with dignity and be surrounded by a team who is committed to their safety and well-being.

**Jacob Shaham, CEO,**

The Palace Group, Miami

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