

MINUTES
Meeting of ORANJ Health Care Committee
March 29, 2016 at Applewood

Present: Virginia Allen (Applewood), Len Cebula (Medford Leas), Alice Crozier, Roger Graham (Evergreens), Joyce McLoughlin (Applewood), Irene Naorlevich (Meadow Lakes), Judy Sullivan (Seabrook), Barbara Trought (Medford Leas).

Absent: Marge Patterson, Ron Whalin

The meeting began at 10. Alice reviewed the agenda and where we were with the two surveys we had launched.

Opinion Poll on IL/AL issues. Judy pointed out that the case law on the ADA is so one-sided in favor of plaintiffs that CCRC managements agree to settle out of court. Thus, for now at least, the problem with trying to mitigate some of the less desirable effects of the mixing of AL into IL populations is the ADA law itself. Originally the law was drafted to alleviate conditions in “public accommodations” such as apartment buildings and employment sites, but that is past history now. The committee recognizes that new legislation on the rights of IL residents has therefore become the appropriate remedy for some of these problems. It does not want to undertake drafting such legislation at this time.

On the issue of scooters etc. in hallways, the local Fire Marshall recently informed Meadow Lakes that it is unsafe to park scooters in the halls. Letters were sent to 15 scooter owners informing them of this fact. Apparently, no further steps have been taken to enforce the restriction. Roger noted that Evergreens has a risk manager who does make rules on many things. People noted that most CCRC buildings were built before mobility devices were so numerous. A new short survey on mobility devices will be distributed at the Plenary of April 20th; it should give us additional information on storage and a few other matters.

Medical Services survey. There is an effort, emanating from the Affordable Care Act and Medicare and joined by CCRC managements, to avoid hospitalization of residents. This results in residents being kept in their apartments longer than they used to be. Sometimes dangerous situations can occur, as when a resident is supposed to take over 12 pills a day and s/he cannot always keep to the schedule. Irene wrote a memo to residents about what is happening, what doctors are now required to do, and what steps residents can take to help themselves.

Keeping residents at home longer will require more staff and equipment. Many members of the committee stressed that the staff person who responds to calls and who

must make assessments on the spot needs to be a competent, credentialed medical professional. In effect, CCRCs will need to send more RNs to handle these calls. In addition, security people, nurses, and other medical staff members will have to stop calling 911 as often as they do now.

It was noted that the CCRC demographic is changing away from a mainly affluent population to one that is more middle class; the latter group has trouble with extra fees that may be assessed to keep people “at home” longer.

Support groups. Bernie Farley at Crane’s Mill has asked Alice for help with their low vision group. There is indeed much that can be offered to help people with low vision—pamphlets, phone numbers of people in the CCRC who will help, different pieces of equipment such as readers. Meadow Lakes has a good working group in this area, as does Evergreens. ORANJ could give out more info on these matters. Alice will follow up.

We talked briefly about the Yellow Dot programs that can be established by counties and municipalities in New Jersey. A copy of the POLST form might also be among the documents in the “file of life” package in the car.

The next meeting of the committee will be on Wednesday, May 25th at Medford Leas at 10 a.m. Please bring yourselves and interested friends.