

Balancing Care and Protection Against Quality of Life

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Early in the pandemic, 40% of deaths were residents or staff members of long term care facilities. As a result, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ordered a ban on outsiders, a policy adopted by most ALFs.

The problem with this solution to spreading the virus is that isolation and loneliness are now taking a tremendous toll on residents. Part of this is caused by ubiquitous understaffing problems, because family members have served to fill the gap for rendering care, such as feeding, clothing, walking, etc. Now the families are gone.

ALFs that have begun reopening are trying to solve the isolation with visits where the family members sit outdoors and the resident sits away or even inside (under roof), but the heat of the summer and the upcoming chill of autumn and winter make this solution temporary at best.

The issue is balancing care and protection against quality of life. There is no easy answer. One has to wonder what choice the residents themselves would make if allowed to do so.

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