



ESTD 1993

COMFORTCARE HOMES®

ALZHEIMER'S CARE

SB 456 now HB 2232
Hearing Thursday 9:30
Senate Public Health and Welfare
– Chairwoman Vicki Schmidt

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

Testimony for Public Hearing

TO: Chairman Vicki Schmidt

We support HB 2232 as amended.

Good Afternoon Committee Members. We represent one of the largest dementia care providers in the Sedgwick County area. In 1993, the Stark family pioneered residential living (facilities) in real homes for people needing memory care as an alternative to nursing home placement. This concept became the first of its kind in the area. Today, you would know this as a HomePlus.

We understand the responsibilities and challenges of caring for individuals faced with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. After 25 years of providing long-term care to Residents and their families, we have seen how tragic and complicated this disease can be. There is no simple solution to housing and caring for individuals that lose a total sense of connection to the person they are, the world they live in, and those that are trying to help care for them.

Several years ago, we understood the value of appropriate video surveillance in our Homes and voluntarily install video systems in the "common" public spaces of some of the houses. Today we have video in all of our properties. It was an act to help reinforce our company's expectation of Premier Care. At first, we were worried that our care staff would feel it was a threat or invasion. Contrary to that concern, we have found that staff appreciate the ability for our supervisory staff to check in and verify any unusual occurrences. In our world, events like a Resident falling is unwanted, but a reality. (Remember that as we age we are more likely to fall. Add dementia to the mix and these are some of the most difficult to manage.) Video surveillance has allowed our supervisors to rule out ill intent or accusation of abuse. It helps us assure and educate our families and care staff during uncertain and emotional times. It promotes accountability. And in the same breathe, video surveillance can help us determine true misconduct and who is to be held accountable.

We have never painted ourselves as perfect in the art of care, but we learn something new every day that pushes our company towards the vision of Premier Care. That is why we are supportive of HB2232 as amended and the right for families to request to electronically monitor their loved one in a "private" space. Even without a Bill, ComfortCare Homes has worked with families that made this request. Having tools that promote a caring partnership between families and facilities is important when everyone's common goal is the care of some of our most vulnerable.



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We are not just supporting this initiative because there are cameras everywhere today or because various industries are looking for the next techno-toy to incorporate into the business plan in order to feel up-with-the-times. For us this particular tool at this particular time shows value, as long as we respect that rights of well-intended families AND quality care providers trying to do their best in an often complicated, yet rewarding act of care.

We ask you to vote in favor of this bill.

Doug Stark, CDP
President

Robert Miller, LMSW, CDP
Vice President of Company Development