

# The New York Times

Opinion

LETTERS

## Assisted Living: Is It the Right Choice?

Readers discuss the pros and cons of assisted living and the options for elder care.

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### To the Editor:

“How Not to Grow Old in America” presents a disjointed and misleading picture of assisted living. Assisted living emerged in the 1980s as a noninstitutional alternative to skilled nursing facilities or nursing homes. Assisted living provides a popular residential option for older people who have supportive care needs due to physical or cognitive limitations who cannot live independently, but do not require round-the-clock medical care.

Over the course of the past 30 or so years, assisted living has grown significantly because it has successfully offered seniors and their families what they need — supportive services (such as bathing, grooming, medication oversight, nutritious meals) and social connectedness in safe, residential settings. Assisted living is certainly not for everyone, but for hundreds of thousands of families it is a welcome option that has significant economic and social advantages.

Assisted living is, in fact, regulated in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and states are actively engaged in oversight. In the past two years, for example, more than 30 states have revisited and revised their assisted living rules.

Finally, the author’s assertion that “most residents of assisted living need substantially more care than they are getting” is completely unfounded.

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