



Letters to the Editor – Washington Post

May 17, 2024

Re: Senior-care referral site 'A Place for Mom' stays mum on neglect

The May 16 article by Christopher Rowland, Steven Rich, Todd C. Frankel, and Douglas MacMillan (Senior-care referral site "A Place for Mom" stays mum on neglect) continues the ongoing, one-sided, and overly negative reporting by the *Washington Post* of assisted living communities that began several months ago. This coverage continues to focus on a very small number of tragic situations that have occurred in an industry serving well over a million individuals a year in 30,000 communities across the country. The vast majority of these settings provide first rate care, nutritious meals, medication compliance, wellness programs and social engagement to fend off depression and myriad negative effects associated with isolation.

The onslaught of articles fails to provide any balance and collectively denigrates thousands of dedicated, compassionate caregivers who are proud to work in assisted living, and who take wonderful care of their resident's day-in-day-out.

The Post's reporting continues to be misleading, as well, characterizing assisted living as unregulated when in fact every state and the District of Columbia licenses and regulates these settings. You report the industry has no mandated inspections, which is also misleading as these settings are regularly inspected across the country by hundreds of dedicated state regulators. Additionally, it is common practice for state regulatory agencies to conduct unscheduled inspections for complaints.

You bemoan the lack of a nationwide report card but fail to recognize the inherent weakness of any rating system. Consumers want objective ratings and reviews from the experiences of real residents and their families. As this article notes, there are significant shortcomings of online ratings and reviews offered by websites like A Place for Mom, Caring.com, Seniorly.com and others. As noted on the Where You Live Matters consumer website, <https://www.wherelyoulivematters.org/resources/senior-placement-services-how-do-they-work/>, while consumer ratings can be helpful, Google reviews are more reliable as they display both positive and negative feedback. Given the importance of finding the right living option, seniors and families deserve transparent, accurate and balanced information about potential choices from all media sources, ratings and reviews providers, internet services and communities themselves to help them make informed decisions.

Consumers need to consider multiple sources and gather additional information including personal visits to communities and reviews from residents and families before making decisions about where to live.

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