



**Testimony to the Ohio House LTC and Aging Committee on HB509
Jean Thompson, Ohio Assisted Living Association, Executive Director, May 28, 2020**

Dear Chairman Ginter, Vice-Chairman Swearingan and Ranking Member Howse,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB509. Even before the current expedited licensure rule was put in place, OALA advocated that it include not only new licenses in the process, but requests for expansions of existing licenses. If an addition is being done for memory care, it makes more sense for providers to ask for an increased license number rather than a separate license. Since license fees are based on the number of units at a property these additional units are still accounted for in revenues to the Department of Health on an annual basis.

When this rule was initially established (3/2018), Health responded to our request to have it include existing license expansion stating they were unsure of how many people would take advantage of this new program and would not include the service for existing property expansions. Now, however, more than 2 years have passed and there seems to have been no excessive drain on Health in terms of providing this service. The service is separately paid for by providers. Fortunately, the established fee is not so high that it puts it out of the range of providers and is less expensive than the alternative of waiting for an indefinite period of time for the inspection which is financially costly to providers and often very difficult for families and residents waiting to move in.

Assisted Living communities need to be ready, once they request an inspection. This means they need staff in place to handle the needs of residents in the new licensure number. Since requests for inspections to add an area and increase the numbers of residents a community is licensed for can take anywhere from 8 to 62 days, with an average of a month, significant costs can take place while waiting.

Additionally, and even more importantly, residents and their families begin to make plans to move in once they see the addition is completed and/or based on the date providers have designated the building to be finished. This placement often involves a number of steps for residents and families, the sale of the new resident's home, or decreasing physical or mental ability that the family can not manage. Assisted living placement is often need driven which makes "waiting" difficult, if not impossible.

This bill simply makes an "adjustment" to existing regulation in order to treat new properties and existing properties in the same way – balancing the scale. It is truly a benefit to all when legislators review Ohio legislation removing unnecessary barriers and making it more equal. Thank you for your time, I would be glad to answer any questions I can.

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