Comparison of Assisted Living Communities With and Without Memory Care in Florida

BACKGROUND

Florida currently has the largest older adult population in the United States, with over one-fifth of its residents aged 65 and older.[1] Of these older adults, 580,000 are estimated to be living with Alzheimer's disease (AD).[1,2] It is believed that in the next five years, this number will increase 24.1% to 720,000.[2] An increasingly appealing residential option for many older adults with AD, and their loved ones, is assisted living communities (ALCs). In Florida, ALCs can offer memory care services if they comply with state requirements to provide a safe environment, nursing supervision, and AD staff training.[3] However, depending on the size of the ALC, the state requirement differs. If the ALC has less than 17 residents, it is not required to have awake staff for 24-hours a day.[3] This raises questions about differences among ALCs that may affect their ability to monitor and ensure residents' safety, particularly the safety of residents with AD. Therefore, this policy brief aims to compare the size, profit status, and location of memory and non-memory care ALCs in rural and urban Florida.

STUDY METHOD

Data on ALCs in Florida were collected from the Florida Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA).[*] Using the address each ALC reports to AHCA, the ALCs were grouped by county. Each county was defined as urban or rural based on the 2010 U.S. Census. A county was considered rural if there were 100 people or less per square mile.[4]

Additional data obtained from AHCA included whether an ALC provided memory care services, the number of beds in each facility, and its profit status (i.e. for profit or non-profit).

FINDINGS

There were 3,090 ALCs in Florida, with 683 (22%) offering memory care services (see Table 1). The 37 urban counties had 3,011 ALCs, of which 22.2% had memory care services. The 30 rural counties had the remaining 79 ALCs, but only 19.0% of these communities provided memory care. A majority of ALCs in urban counties (93.8%) and rural counties (86.1%) were for profit.

ALCs Providing Memory Care: Overall, the median number of beds in ALCs providing memory care was 78.0 (range: 2-350), with only 26.1% of these ALCs having less than 17 beds. In rural ALCs the median number of beds was 72.0 (range 2-350), compared to the median of 78.0 (range: 2-350) in the urban counties. More than 91% of the 683 ALCs with memory care were for-profit, with 14 found in rural counties and 611 in urban counties

ALCs Not Providing Memory Care: The median number of beds in ALCs that did not provide memory care was 6.0 (range: 3-330), and 74.7% had less than 17 beds. In ALCs in rural counties, the median number of beds was 21.5 (range: 3-175) and in urban counties it was 6.0 (range: 3-330). Of the 2,407 non-memory ALCs, 94.2% were for-profit. Fifty-four of these facilities were in rural counties, compared to 2,214 in urban counties.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that a majority of the ALCs that offer memory care in rural and urban Florida are large, for-profit facilities, which require awake staff 24 hours a day. Recent research indicates that large ALCs have a smaller proportion of residents with AD when compared to smaller ALCs.[5] This suggests that memory care services may not be available where the needs are greater, in smaller ALCs, which also are not required to provide 24-hour awake staff.

As Florida's older population continues to grow, there will be an increasing number of individuals with AD, resulting in an increased number of people who will need access to the long-term care options.[6] It is necessary that policy makers examine the availability and adequacy of memory care services in all ALCs, particularly smaller ALCs that may be home to higher proportions of residents with memory impairment.

REFERENCES

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					# of ALCs with	# of ALCS with	

Table 1. Florida Assisted Living Communities By County (2020)

County	Rural (Y/N)?	ALF (Y/N)?	# of ALCs?	# of ALCs with memory care?	# of ALCs with less than 17 beds?	# of ALCS with 17 or more beds?	For-profit (Y/N)?
Alachua	N	Y	12	5	4	8	10
Baker	Y	Y	1	0	1	0	1
Bay	N	Y	9	4	0	9	8
Bradford	Y	Y	2	0	1	1	2
Brevard	N	Y	128	32	94	34	120
Broward	N	Y	272	48	190	82	262
Calhoun	Y	Y	2	0	0	2	2
Charlotte	N	Y	20	8	5	15	19
Citrus	N	Y	23	10	7	16	18
Clay	N	Y	16	4	8	8	15
Collier	N	Y	35	20	9	26	29
Columbia	Y	Y	9	2	2	7	7
De Soto	Y	Y	4	0	2	2	4
Dixie	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Duval	N	Y	88	35	42	46	76
Escambia	N	Y	25	9	5	20	20
Flagler	N	Y	21	4	15	6	21
Franklin	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Gadsden	Y	Y	4	1	3	1	3
Gilchrist	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Glades	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Gulf	Y	Y	1	0	0	1	1
Hamilton	Y	Y	3	0	3	0	3
Hardee	Y	Y	4	0	3	1	3
Hendry	Y	Y	1	0	0	1	1
Hernando	N	Y	26	8	16	10	25
Highlands	Y	Y	9	2	1	8	7
Hillsborough	N	Y	261	67	184	77	251
Holmes	Y	Y	2	0	1	1	2
Indian River	N	Y	20	9	3	17	15
Jackson	Y	Y	2	0	1	1	2
Jefferson	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Lafayette	Y	Y	2	1	0	2	2
Lake	N	Y	50	17	20	30	47
Lee	N	Y	68	22	28	40	60
Leon	N	Y	18	13	3	15	17
Levy	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Liberty	Y	Y	2	0	1	1	2
Madison	Y	Y	7	1	5	2	7
Manatee	N	Y	41	18	15	26	36
Marion	N	Y	34	11	7	27	30

Martin	N	Y	18	10	3	15	17
Miami-Dade	N	Y	831	33	771	60	818
Monroe	Y	Y	3	0	2	1	0
Nassau	N	Y	6	5	0	6	5
Okaloosa	N	Y	13	7	2	11	9
Okeechobee	Y	Y	1	0	0	1	1
Orange	N	Y	110	30	74	36	105
Osceola	N	Y	36	1	25	11	34
Palm Beach	N	Y	193	58	121	72	180
Pasco	N	Y	47	15	18	29	45
Pinellas	N	Y	176	49	77	99	162
Polk	N	Y	40	15	3	37	35
Putnam	N	Y	10	2	5	5	6
Santa Rosa	N	Y	12	3	0	12	12
Sarasota	N	Y	87	28	32	55	78
Seminole	N	Y	62	23	32	30	52
St. Johns	N	Y	20	9	4	16	17
St. Lucie	N	Y	77	14	66	11	76
Sumter	N	Y	12	7	2	10	11
Suwanee	Y	Y	2	0	0	2	1
Taylor	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Union	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Volusia	N	Y	101	21	56	45	90
Wakulla	Y	N	0	0	0	0	0
Walton	Y	Y	4	2	1	3	4
Washington	Y	Y	7	0	4	3	7

Source: Licensing and Surveying Agency for Healthcare Administration
Note. ALC= Assisted living community; AD= Alzheimer's disease.