What You Can Do!

Because you are the Authority Having Jurisdiction, you are the one who can make the biggest difference in the lives of hundreds of elders now living in nursing homes. Many of these elders are of such advanced age they may not live long enough to benefit from these positive Life Safety Code revisions if the routine code adoption process is followed.

That is why the Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS) has issued a survey direction to all state agencies that certify nursing homes for federal reimbursement to permit a waiver based on these four provisions of the Life Safety Code, 2012 edition. They realize it may take several years to process a rule change from the 2000 edition to the 2012 edition and that this amount of time will be harmful to the elders now living in nursing homes. Because of this, CMS has created a legal method to allow designers to implement these four revisions immediately without waiting for the adoption of the complete 2012 edition.

But many state laws and rules will still not permit the use of these revisions because the 2012 Life Safety Code has not yet been adopted by many states. However, some states are quickly acting to immediately implement these new Life Safety Code revisions, by developing waiver provisions similar to those of CMS so these revisions can be incorporated into current designs.

AHJ Action

Because the 2012 LSC will not be effective in Florida until the end of 2014, please consider similar actions to allow these four important fire safety provisions of NFPA 101 to be implemented without further delay. NFPA 101, Section 1.4.3 Equivalent Compliance, permits the AHJ to accept “Alternative systems, methods, or devices… as being in compliance with this Code”. By accepting these 4 stand alone revisions as equivalent to the 2009 LSC, you will create an immediate and positive effect on the lives of elders who live in the nursing homes you regulate, but who may not live long enough to benefit from these revisions until the date this code is finally enforced in Florida.

For further information on these important changes and for ways to get involved in this historic work, please contact Cathy Lieblich at: cathy.lieblich@pioneernetwork.net.
The Importance of These New Fire Protection Revisions

All too often nursing homes have been designed as medical models like hospitals because of the fire codes required to be followed. But now the NFPA Life Safety Code committees have adopted 4 new standards to support a new design concept often referred to as "culture change". These new fire codes will encourage and permit designs that replicate the normal living environment of "home" within a health care setting.

For all Elders, especially those with dementia, it is very important that spaces look familiar so an ease of understanding and an ability to function at their highest levels are achieved.

The positive impact of these revisions for elders cannot be overstated. Benefits to people living in nursing homes include:

1. A kitchen with a cook top for a full range of cooking is permitted on one side only. Fixed seating 6 feet from the kitchen wall, clear corridor width to be no less than 6 feet, and there are no obstructions to the fixed seating equipment. These items may be attached directly to a wall, ceiling area, or to a non-removable door if directly to a wall, ceiling area, or to a non-removable door.

Fire Safety is maintained by:

- Fire alarm: Fixed seating is permitted on one side only.
- Fire protection: The kitchen area is limited to 30 beds, separated by a smoke barrier, range hood with suppression system, and secured power switch with timer.

2. Fixed seating is permitted within the fire compartment.