

# Specific Designs For Assisted Living

## Providers Ask AIA For Differentiation From SNFs

**F**our provider associations called on the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to consider assisted living residences distinct from nursing facilities as AIA develops guidelines for design and construction. In February, AIA announced that it would publish for the first time guidelines on assisted living facilities in its 2005 edition of “Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals and Health Care Facilities.”

In August, the National Center for Assisted Living, the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, the American Seniors

Housing Association, and the Assisted Living Federation of America specified in a memo to AIA that assisted living residences should be designed, operated, and maintained in a manner appropriate to the special needs of the population served.

The groups also discouraged AIA from attempting to place assisted living design on a parallel track with nursing facility design.

“Adopting a traditional institutional health care model stifles the very spirit that led to the creation of assisted living. Assisted living is a residential model and appropriate guidelines to

reference are those designed for residences such as multifamily housing, bed and breakfasts, or hotels and motels,” says the memo, which also outlines other key factors that AIA should consider in developing its guidelines.

These factors include the variety in size and scope of assisted living facilities, the varying licensing requirements from state to state, the many levels of services offered in assisted living, and the inclusion of purpose-designed units for individuals with dementia.

—Amy Wayne