

## Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, Inc.

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July 22, 2003

Dear Editor:

I have carefully read the nursing home report by the State's Board on Aging and am frankly hard pressed to arrive at the conclusions reported by your paper (*Phase Out Nursing Homes, State Board Reports*, July 17, 2003).

While the State report addressed the changing role of today's nursing homes, it did not call for a phase out of these skilled care facilities. In fact, the report emphasizes that "Nursing homes must continue to be a part of the overall long term care system. There is not likely ever to be a time when some form of medical model of long term care is not needed for certain specific persons."

The article completely missed the Board's point that the role of today's nursing home is evolving from the custodial caregivers of the past to providers of sub-acute, restorative and rehabilitative care to short-term residents who will shortly be discharged home. Long term stays in today's nursing homes are primarily for residents with end-stage conditions, including dementia, and those with behavioral challenges.

This changing role of nursing homes is a far cry from the "phase out" depiction presented by your recent article. We trust future articles in your paper will more accurately capture the mission and spirit of today's nursing homes.

Sincerely,

John Sauer, Executive Director  
Wisconsin Association of Homes  
and Services for the Aging

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*The Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (WAHSA) is a statewide membership organization of not-for-profit corporations principally serving elderly and disabled persons. Membership is comprised of 198 religious, fraternal, private and governmental not-for-profit organizations which own, operate and/or sponsor 154 private and 47 county-operated nursing facilities, 65 community-based residential facilities, 32 residential care apartment complexes, 95 senior housing complexes, 26 facilities for the developmentally disabled, 10 licensed home health agencies, and over 300 community service agencies which offer programs ranging from Alzheimer's support, child and adult day care, hospice and home care to Meals on Wheels.*

