

ISRAEL SENIOR RESIDENCE ASSOCIATION
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Newsletter – August 2020

The Israel Senior Housing Residence Association was founded in 2000, with the objective of protecting the rights of residents in senior residence facilities.

To date, the Association consists of 10,000 members residing in 42 senior residence facilities, and the members of its directorate, auditing committee, the treasurer and the secretary are all volunteer members.

The Association is recognized by the Ministry of Justice as a "Consumer Organization", which allows it to represent all the residents, including filing claims aimed at protecting residents' rights.

After several years of hard work by the Association, the Assisted Living Law was legislated by the Knesset in June 2012 and most of its articles came into effect in December 2012. The law regulates all aspects of senior residence issues, protects the rights of residents, and establishes inspection regulations. (Hebrew and English versions of the Law can be found on the Association's website).

Some sections of the law which relate to oversight have yet to be implemented as legislation of the regulations for carrying out oversight and the issue of licenses to the facilities are yet to be finalized. We are working to speed up the finalization of this legislation.

Another one of the Association's major successes was passing an amendment to Article 27 of the Assisted Living Law regarding deposits. Our intensive efforts have borne fruit and the Knesset passed the amendment to Article 27, and the Securities Clause went into effect in January 2020.



Dear members of the Israel Senior Residence Association,

As every year, we are issuing an informative brochure for all members presenting summary of this past year's activities as well as our plans for the coming one. We hope that this information will help new residents understand what the Association does, in the hopes that some of you will volunteer to take part in some of its activities. In addition, we recommend that residents and their family members occasionally access the Association's website, which is updated regularly and provides all the relevant news. We are also on Facebook.

This past year was one of great upheavals in our country, none of which, of course, skipped the residents of senior residence facilities. The last bulletin was issued in September 2019, when we faced the second round of national elections, which was followed by a third round.

1. We held our semi-annual meeting at the end of December 2019, during which – among others – a report of the various activities carried out during 2018 and the first half of 2019 was given, and the budget for 2020 was approved.
2. The position of the Commissioner- in charge of Assisted Living facilities in the Ministry of Welfare has been filled, after eight months (Ms. Julie Oz, the outgoing Commissioner left on 1 June 2019). Mr. Shlomi Bar Lev was appointed and contacted us immediately. We are working together and cooperating closely with him and are discovering that he understands and is aware of the issues which we raise.
3. The outbreak of the Corona virus almost completely prevents all normal and routine activities, including meetings of the Association's directors or face-to-face meetings with elements in the government that are supposed to address our problems. Despite these limitations, we are initiating digital meetings and participating in relevant meetings, thereby significantly affecting decisions which concern residents of senior facilities.

Over the past few months, we have been active in various forums, such as:

- We participated in sessions held by the Minister for Social Equality, Knesset member Merav Cohen, on every Corona - related issue
 - We participated in some of the Knesset's Corona Committee meetings.
 - We met with Prof. Gamzu (former head of the "Magen Avot veImahot" – Elderly Care committee) in order to provide guidance re plans for old-age homes and senior residence facilities.
 - We are in constant contact with Prof. Nimrod Maimon, present head of the "Elderly Care" committee.
 - We have been successful in implementing the understanding of the fundamental difference between a resident of an old-age home and a resident of an assisted living facility, in many of the entities dealing with senior citizens issues
 - The synchronization of residents' medical information between the residence clinic of the sick funds (Kupot Cholim) is yet to be resolved
 - We had asked the Minister of Health to promote Corona testing in senior residence facilities and to ensure that they promise to synchronize the medical data between the Kupot Cholim and the clinics of the senior residence facilities.
4. The Ministry of Health's negative response to our request forced us to instruct our legal counsel - the offices of Weiss-Porat, to file a lawsuit with the High Court. The court decided not to intervene in the issue of Corona tests (as long as we cannot prove that external elements were considerations). In actual fact, after the lawsuit was filed, the Ministry of Health speeded up testing in senior residence facilities (even those where there had not been cases of morbidity) and even began publicizing special instructions for senior residence facilities during Corona. With regard to the synchronizing of medical information, one can see from the decision that the High Court accepts the fact that the Association's claim is a just one but it considers the position of the Ministry of Health, according to which "the issue is expected to be discussed by several ministries together with the sick funds after we have finished dealing with the outbreak of the Corona virus" and therefore, the Court feels that the appeal is premature. However, it added that if this dialogue does not take place and there is no synchronization, the residences can resubmit their claims to the High Court. The

achievement of the appeal is that the High Court, for the first time, included in its decision an obligation by the authorities to deal with the issue of synchronization. It therefore seems to us that the Association, as a public body, was at least partly successful in attaining its goal.

As we write this newsletter, we have initiated contacts with elements in the Ministry of Health in order to further the issue even before the Corona crisis comes to an end.

5. On 30.6.2020, we held an important meeting with the Commissioner- in charge of Assisted Living in the Ministry of Welfare, Mr. Shlomi bar Lev, with the participation of the following: The Ministry's legal counsel, att'y Noam Falick; att'y Dana Hakmon, from the offices of Weiss-Porat, attorneys-at-law, our legal counsels; att'y Ruth Preminger, the head of the Prilog Office of government relations and strategy which represents us and advises us with regard to the workings of the Knesset and ministries; members of the Association's directorate - Leah Schatz-Soffer, acting chairperson of the Association at that time, and att'y Shoshana Weinshal, member of the Association's directorate.

The following issues were raised during the meeting:

- The promotion of regulations in the Assisted Living Law and the regulations of the 2 Funds of Article 27; synchronization of medical data; legislation of the "Semi-independent Seniors' Residence" law; instructions in times of crisis/disease; the number of positions for social workers in senior residence facilities; emergency regulations – in times of emergency/of Corona; follow-up on the implementation of Article 27; transparency with regard to cost increases beyond the index; transparency with regard to refunds [should there be any] as a result of the Corona crisis. A summary of the meeting was sent to all our member-committees.

We prepared a proposal for instructions and regulations should there be a renewed outbreak of Corona, and the Commissioner is working hard to hold comprehensive discussions on the issue with all relevant parties.

6. We continue to deal with all the issues which have been put on hold in view of the Corona outbreak, such as the increase charged above and beyond the index, irregular municipal tax payments in some residences, the cancellation of VAT charged to the residents, the implementation of guarantees for deposits as per the amendment to Article 27 of the Assisted Living Law, legislation re massive construction works in an inhabited home.
7. We continue to meet with representatives of residents in new senior residence facilities and some have joined the Association.
8. Association representatives were invited to talk about senior residence facilities with students studying in old-age home and senior residence facilities management university courses.
9. With the assistance of Arik Rosenthal PR office which we have hired, the press has been friendly and has done much to publicize the implications of how we were treated during the Corona crisis, by the senior residence facilities.

We would like to thank the various media reporters (press, radio, television) for their willingness to raise these issues as part of other important issues for the public at large.

10. The list of activities carried out by the Directorate between January and May 2020 was sent to all our member- committees on 24.5.2020.

11. We obtained special terms and tariffs with an insurance company regarding flat-inventory insurance, including third-party liability coverage. The offer is valid until the end of 2020.

The offer includes car comprehensive insurance based on the actual number of kilometers driven as well as for a mobility scooter. Most of us could save up on 1,000 NIS a year.

As you know, as a result of the Corona outbreak and the limitations placed upon our activities, we have had to postpone our annual meeting which is usually held at the end of June, in accordance with the regulations of the Registrar of Associations – which has given us permission to submit our reports at a later date, due to the Corona crisis.

We hope to be able to hold the general meeting on September 9th 2020 and see there the representatives of all our member-committees, during which time we will endorse the 2019 financial report and the amendment to the 2020 proposed-budget, as well as the chairperson's report, as required by law. We shall also hold elections for members of the Directorate and the auditing committee.

In June, Avraham Bar David notified the members of the Association's Directorate that he was resigning his position as chairperson of the Association and as a member of the Association's Directorate. The members of the Directorate thank Avraham Bar David for his great contribution as chairperson of the Association, over the past four years, and regret his decision to resign. Avraham Bar David resolutely led us to the successful conclusion of the amendment to Article 27 – the securities clause – and the promotion of legislation of the regulations of the Assisted Living Law. He also started the Association on what seems to be a long "journey", to achieving 0 [zero] VAT for residents of senior residence facilities. In addition, he continued to further relations with the Association and the heads of the chains and collaborated with them, as well as dealing with a variety of issues that required daily attention.

As customary during the Corona pandemic, the Directorate used internet communications to vote Ms. Leah Schatz-Soffer (acting chairperson of the Association) as Chairperson, and Avraham Rozenshtreich as Acting Chairperson. Notice of the change was sent to our member-committees on 8.7.20.

After the elections that are to take place at the Association's general meeting on 9.9.20, the Directorate will meet and select the various functionaries from among its members.



*With the coming of the New Year, we wish you all a happy year,
a year without any health crises, without recurring waves of
the Corona virus or waves of any other reprehensible situations,*

SHANA TOVA

Leah Schatz-Soffer, Chairperson of the Association