

WHY SHOULD CAMERAS BE ALLOWED IN ALZHEIMER'S ROOMS

By Harry Crowell, one of the owners of

[Vista Care Memory Gardens](#)

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There are many reasons to allow in room cameras in bedrooms but the first is to remember these wonderful people are concerned for their safety. They are quite aware they are short in the ability to defend their selves for just about any transgression. They have short term memory loss but have an amazing ability to remember transgressions, excitement, fun times, good food, long ago friends, sickness, falls, games, singing songs, sporting events, a "hole in one" at golf, trips and travel events, they even sit at the piano and begin to play like they have never missed a day of practice.

They also have an ongoing problem of remembering things that have never happened and tell mighty fine stories of impossible events. These events include stories of things that occur in their rooms and no one is able to really know truth from fiction. The Alzheimer's affected person is not malicious but has an amazing way to describe something that really never happened. Some of these stories affect employees, family members, visitors and other Residents. This is not fair and we must have a proper way to diffuse stories both true and imaginary.

We have asked each Resident that has signed up and lived in our facility and each person and their families have accepted in room cameras and constantly ask when they will be turned on. We have direction from the state department that if we use the cameras our license will be taken away.

I have been an Advisor Member of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Alzheimer's Association for nearly ten years and have read many articles, visited other facilities discussed many subjects regarding Alzheimer's and am a solid supporter for in room cameras for the ongoing safety and health reasons for these Residents. The health and safety is a serious charge to take care of. Medications are given to these Residents on a daily basis, morning, noon and evening. These are very important to be given properly, the records are kept meticulously, but how is anyone to be certain they are actually given other than the report? The In room camera will actually show the pills given and the time of day. The Residents often wear diapers and our reports are also kept; how do we really know?

When we hire an employee the employee must undergo mandated tests, Medical, criminal and financial to be sure we hire people with a good background, these tests cost about \$300 per new hire, so it is imperative we try our best to hire responsible people that seem to really have the best interest of Alzheimer's affected people from the beginning. We then must train them for about two weeks before they are left to be alone in their job function. We also give ongoing education and training to try our best to be certain we have people in all positions that really want to do a good job and really care for the health and well-being of the Residents; it is expensive to hire; and even more expensive, to terminate a poor quality employee. From the first interview we tell every new employee we have cameras

everywhere and they sign acknowledgments of the camera policy and are quite happy we have these cameras to assist them in being assured they are treated fair.

We discuss on premise cameras and our in room camera policy and we have not had any person indicate they do not want cameras. We also tell them we are trying to have our in room cameras turned on and are awaiting an approval. This approval has never been given nor acknowledged other than a letter two years or more ago saying they will let us know.

The department has only indicated it is a privacy issue that is in the state of California documents and safety has no bearing. Every law enforcement agency in the country approves of cameras and would like more of them; our Residents need the same rights.

There are several Bills right now in the Senate and Assembly that are trying to make safety the big effort. These bills all fail miserably. They add more fines and monetary penalties, more government inspections and yet they only add more costs to an already low income and profit industry.

The facility already must pass a large set of rules, regulations, inspections and more double regulations than anyone can really understand, the state reads and approves all of the operating manuals before the facility can open for business.

The problem is not that these facilities do not have rules and regulations to follow; it is that they must follow all the rules and hire the correct people that actually need to fully understand and operate under the rules. When mistakes are made and the employee does anything against the rules that employee is not charged with any wrongdoing but rather the company is charged. These new bills just increase the fines against the company. We should have a more proper way to have employees that make errors, be given an education opportunity to accomplish in a short time which will improve work ethic, skill, opportunity, personal knowledge and potentials in the job market to move up in the salary range by taking these classes. Fines and more government inspections only add more cost to an already overburdened industry.

It is well known that a quality camera system is quite expensive and no facilities should have any regulation mandating them to be used. There are also many employees, visitors, family and Alzheimer's patients that do not want cameras. There should never be a mandate that cameras be a requirement for every facility. Cameras should only be in facilities that will properly use the cameras and that will follow the privacy procedures as we have written in [Vista Care Memory Gardens](#) applications. The privacy issue is one we guard well.

How can we get in room cameras approved, so that we can provide them to the residents of Vista Care Memory Gardens?

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