Accreditation Group CARF Takes Senior Living to the Next Level
The Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, which goes by the peppier CARF International, has issued new standards of quality applicable to independent living communities and revised standards for assisted living communities.

CARF is a nonprofit accrediting organization. “We’re not an advocacy organization. We’re a neutral body whose primary work is to develop and implement standards of quality to help quality improvement and foster performance improvement,” explains Sue Matthiesen, the organization’s managing director of the aging services accreditation area. CARF accredits thousands of health and human services programs serving everyone from children to seniors and organizes its programs into 11 standards manuals, including a manual for aging services applicable to independent and assisted living, dementia care and stroke specialty programs, among others.

Continuing care retirement communities are eligible to receive a five-year accreditation and other communities can achieve a one or three-year accreditation, depending on how they’ve conformed to CARF standards. “And of course any organization that is CARF-accredited needs to already be meeting state, federal and local requirements,” she said. “Just because they’re accredited is not a pass to meet regulatory requirements.”

“Assisted living offers a culture of customer service and hospitality as well as an environment of safety and security of persons served,” reads CARF’s latest Aging Services manual. “A philosophy of independence, engagement and wellness guides the communications between personnel and persons served in assisted living.

The International Standards Advisory Committee (ISAC) reviews the aging services standards every three years. The ISAC makes recommendations to CARF concerning the adequacy and appropriateness of the standards. Recommendations from the dialogue are used to make new and revised standards, which are then made available for public review. CARF reviews the input and makes changes where it deems necessary.

The latest CARF manuals with new and revised standards are available on its website, for a fee.