

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday May 1, 2008
CONTACT: Evan Thies, 917 715 9265

Workers, Activists Deliver Petition to Lazard Boss Bruce Wasserstein, Demanding Atria Improve Treatment of Its Workers on International Workers Rights Day

150 employees calling for billionaire CEO to use his influence to help stop Atria from squeezing employees at Atria health facilities

New York, NY—Underpaid workers from local Atria Senior Living facilities protested today outside the home of Bruce Wasserstein, CEO of Lazard, Ltd. One hundred and fifty workers signed and delivered a petition, demanding better pay and treatment at the hundreds of Atria facilities around the country. Workers also condemned Wasserstein for taking a \$100+ million payday last year while knowing about poor conditions at some Atria facilities and poverty wages for the company's employees.

Lazard paid Bruce Wasserstein \$41 million for 2007 and, on the same day, gave him a new five-year deal worth about *another \$100 million*. Elderly residents who live at Atria facilities pay exorbitant fees – as much as \$8,000 a month in New York – but many suffer from medication errors, short-staffing, and other serious care problems. Average pay for Atria workers is \$8-\$10 an hour, and workers report that the costs of company-offered healthcare puts it well beyond their reach.

For more than a year, workers at Lazard-affiliated Atria facilities nationwide have been struggling to form a union for a real voice in pay, working conditions, resident care and staffing. Unfortunately, Atria and the Lazard-affiliated fund that owns Atria have lashed out by threatening and intimidating workers in an attempt to pressure them not to unite. The National Labor Relations Board has issued a complaint against Atria for threatening to discipline, discharge, or take wage increases away from workers because of their support for forming a union. Also, Atria is under investigation for discrimination against workers based on their national origin.

Lazard Ltd. is a powerhouse Wall Street firm that manages more than \$140 billion. A Lazard-affiliated private equity buyout fund owns Atria Senior Living, one of the country's largest senior living providers with more than 130 facilities nationwide. Atria is New York's largest assisted living provider with 24 facilities in the state, including 18 facilities in Manhattan, Westchester and Long Island. The health care provider is also one of the largest such companies in the United States.

More at www.improveassistedliving.org

The Campaign to Improve Assisted Living is an SEIU Healthcare campaign that unites assisted living caregivers with residents, family members, and senior advocates to stand for quality services for seniors and a voice on the job for caregivers. More than 1 million healthcare workers in hospitals, nursing homes, and in-home care have united in SEIU Healthcare for quality care and quality jobs.