

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Advocacy program for patients/residents residing in Nursing and Rest Homes and their families.

This program's goal is to promote advocacy and outreach to all patients/residents residing in nursing and rest homes. Ombudsmen help residents resolve complaints about personal care, residents' rights or any type of issue or concern affecting their life as a patient/resident in a long term care facility. Program staff and Ombudsmen volunteers follow written procedures for complaint resolution and adhere to confidentiality. They also serve as a referral source for people in the community with questions about eligibility or placement in long term care facilities.

Under the Federal Older Americans Act, every state is required to have a Long Term Care Ombudsman Program that addresses complaints and advocates for improvements in the long term care system. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for residents of nursing and rest homes. An Ombudsman is a Certified and Trained Representative (Advocate) of the People. We...

- Empower Patients/Residents in Upholding THEIR Rights;
- Mediate Resolution of Patient/Resident Concerns with Facility Staff;
- Provide Information and Education to Patients/Residents, Resident Representatives, Facility Staff and the Community.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program's mandate is to represent the patient/resident and assist at his or her direction. The Older Americans Act requires the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program to have resident consent prior to investigating a complaint or referring a complaint to another agency. When someone other than the patient/resident files a complaint, the ombudsman must determine, to the extent possible, what the patient/resident wants.

If someone other than a patient/resident, contacts the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program with a complaint, the ombudsman will visit the patient/resident to see if they have similar concerns and wants to pursue the complaint. The ombudsman will explain the role of the program and the complaint investigation process; share information about residents' rights; ask about the patient/resident's quality of life and care; and seek to understand the patient/resident's capacity to make decisions. If the patient/resident wants the ombudsman to act on the problem, the ombudsman will investigate the complaint and continue to communicate with the patient/resident throughout the investigation process. If the patient/resident cannot provide consent, the ombudsman will work with the patient/resident representative or follow program policies and procedures if the patient/resident does not have a representative.

Volunteer Opportunity - Ombudsmen staff are state trained and certified through the State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program's Office. The training must be completed before the Ombudsman can enter their assigned facility in an official capacity. All ombudsmen receive a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education each year and are re-certified every two years. Supervision is provided by the Local Director of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.

Cost - There is no cost for Ombudsman support.

