

The Role of the Ombudsman

A long-term Ombudsman is an advocate for residents of nursing homes, and assisted living facilities. Ombudsmen are trained to resolve problems. Under the federal Older Americans Act, every state is required to have an Ombudsman program that addresses complaints, and advocates for improvements in the long term care system.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman:

- Resolves complaints made by or for residents of long term care facilities
- Educates consumers and long term care providers about residents' rights and good care practices.
- Promotes community involvement through volunteer opportunities.
- Provides information to the public on nursing homes and other long term care facilities and services, residents' rights, and legislative and policy issues.
- Advocates for residents' rights and quality care in nursing homes, personal care, residential care and other long term care facilities.
- Promotes the development of citizen organizations, family councils and resident councils.

Who Can Use Ombudsman Services?

- Residents of any nursing home or assisted living facility.
- A family member or friend of a resident.
- Any administrator or employee with a concern about a resident at their facility.
- Any individual or citizen's group interested in the welfare of residents.
- Individuals and families who are considering long term care placement.

What Concerns Does an Ombudsman Address?

- Violation of residents' rights or dignity.
- Physical, verbal or mental abuse, deprivation of services necessary to maintain residents' physical and mental health; or unreasonable confinement.
- Poor quality of care, including inadequate personal hygiene and slow response to requests for assistance.
- Improper transfer or discharge of patient.
- Inappropriate use of chemical or physical restraints.
- Any resident concern about quality of care or quality of life.