



Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Quality of Life & Quality of Care

Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area



Objectives

- Understand the role of a Long-term Care Ombudsman
- Characterize types of concerns where ombudsman involvement is appropriate
- Understand ombudsman consent and confidentiality requirements
- Identify advocacy tools that enhance resident empowerment



Long-term Care Ombudsman Program

- Advocates for residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- State and federally mandated program - Older Americans Act
- Protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents of nursing and assisted living facilities
- Ombudsmen are independent of any long-term care facility
- Services are free, confidential, and available statewide



Region 5 Structure

State office:

- Includes the State Ombudsman, five ombudsmen specialists and an office manager
- The State Ombudsman certifies each volunteer and staff ombudsman

Local offices:

- The state contracts with 28 local ombudsman entities, local ombudsman programs operate under the direction of the State Ombudsman
- Each has a Managing Local Ombudsman and volunteers
- Larger programs may have additional staff ombudsmen
- Volunteers receive the same training as staff



What We Do

Ombudsmen provide services to help protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of people living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Ombudsmen:

- Provide information and assistance
- Identify, investigate, and work to resolve problems
- Represent residents
- Educate



When Ombudsman Can Help

- Residents' rights
- Quality of care
- Quality of life
- Family issues
- Problem-solving
- Discharge questions
- Staff in-services
- Speaker for resident or family council



Example

Complaint: Ms. Smith gets help taking a shower in the morning, but she would rather take her shower in the evening.



Consent & Confidentiality

Ombudsmen must have consent to:

- Work on a resident's behalf
- Access records
- Reveal a person's name or identifying characteristics



What We Look for During Visits

Are residents:

- Clean and dressed?
- Participating in regular activities?
- Receiving meals and snacks?
- Asked about individual preferences?
- Restrained?*
- Treated with kindness and respect?
- Heard?

Do staff:

- Know the residents by name?
- Respond quickly to call lights?
- Knock on doors before entering a resident's room?
- Treat residents with respect, courtesy, and dignity?
- Ensure residents are covered for privacy when being moved in the hallway for a bath and while providing care?
- Wear name badges?



When a Complaint is Identified

Residents

- Listen to the resident, take the resident's perspective
- Investigate: observe, interview, review records
- Advocate even if there is no regulatory violation
- Determine if other people can help

Other Complainants

- Collect information
- Speak to the resident and get the resident's permission to assist
- **Only take action with permission from resident or complainant**



Frequent Top Complaints

Nursing Home

1. Failure to respond to requests for help
2. Food service
3. Cleanliness, pests, housekeeping
4. Dignity, respect, staff attitudes
5. Symptoms unattended, including pain, no notice to others on change of condition

Assisted Living

1. Food service
2. Equipment and building in disrepair
3. Cleanliness, pests, housekeeping
4. Medications
5. Odors



Resident Advocacy Tools

- Help residents voice concerns and resolve his or her own problems
- Encourage participation in resident council
- Educate about residents' rights
- Educate about the facility grievance process
- Encourage participation in care or service plans
 - A care plan is the document that guides the delivery of care for *each* resident
 - The care plan addresses quality of care and quality of life issues in a way that supports residents' rights.



Questions?

Thank you for your interest in the ombudsman program.



Contact Information

**Contact the Area Agency on Aging
Aging Services Information, Referrals, and Assistance**

512-916-6054

888-622-9111

Email AAACAP Information, Referral and Assistance.