

# OFFICE OF THE STATE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS  
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<http://www.iowa.gov/elderaffairs/advocacy/ombudsman.html>

## WHAT IS THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM?

- Long-Term Care Ombudsmen are advocates for residents of nursing homes, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities and elder group homes.
- They work to resolve problems of individual residents and to bring about changes at the local, state and national levels to improve care.
- All services provided by this office are confidential and free of charge.
- Callers may remain anonymous.

## WHY MIGHT YOU CALL YOUR LOCAL OMBUDSMAN?

- To get information and assistance about a certain topic such as how to choose a long-term care facility, discharge planning or daily life and activities in a facility.
- To learn more about the rights of people living in a long-term care setting.
- To clarify state or federal regulations or facility policies.
- To ask for assistance with resolving a concern.
- To ask an ombudsman to investigate your complaints and work to resolve those complaints to the satisfaction of the resident.
- To get assistance with the involuntary discharge process.
- To learn about resources available.
- To request a speaker.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

People who live in a long-term care facility should be aware that they are entitled to many rights. They include, but are not limited to, the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect at all times.
- Privacy and confidentiality.
- Participate in the care planning process.
- Make decisions about treatment plans and alternatives.
- Decide how to live, including when to go to bed, when to get up and what to eat.
- Be free from discrimination of any kind.
- Retain personal belongings.
- Security of personal possessions.
- Pursue individual interests.
- Complain or express grievances without fear of reprisal.
- Be fully informed about services and costs.
- Be free from restraints, abuse and neglect.

## RESIDENT ADVOCATE COMMITTEES

- Each long-term care facility is required to have a committee of volunteer advocates.
- Volunteers operate under the direction of this office, and not the facility.
- Names and phone numbers of the volunteers must be posted in a prominent place in each facility.