



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF AGING



# **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

**Making a Difference One  
Consumer at a Time**

# The Pennsylvania Department of Aging Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

*Our mission is to  
"advocate for those who can't,  
support those who can,  
and ensure all long-term  
care consumers live with  
dignity and respect."*



## Residents of long-term care facilities have numerous rights under federal and state law.

### Some of these rights are:

- Right to know and exercise your rights
- Right to know about services and financial charges
- Right to be consulted in planning your medical treatment
- Right to decline medical treatment
- Right to confidentiality of records
- Right to privacy in treatment and care
- Right to freedom from restraints
- Right to express grievances without fear of retaliation
- Rights pertaining to admission, transfers and discharges, including the right to appeal



The Department of Aging contracts with the 52 Area Agencies on Aging which cover all 67 counties and provide Ombudsman services throughout the Commonwealth.

## What is an Ombudsman?

Ombudsman is a Swedish word, which means "citizen representative." Pennsylvania Ombudsmen are trained individuals who advocate to resolve complaints on behalf of people who receive long-term care services.

## What does an Ombudsman Do?

- Provides information to residents and family about rights, procedures and additional resources within the facility or community.
- Investigates concerns and works to resolve issues that may involve a resident in a long-term care facility.
- Offers consumer education programs and carries out training for facility staff.
- Assists in the development of resident and family councils.

## Who uses an Ombudsman?

- Residents or potential residents of long-term care facilities, as well as individuals receiving services from community and adult day care
- Long-term care residents' friends or family
- Long-term care administrators and agencies
- Members of community groups and government agencies
- Citizens who want to improve long-term care

## When should an Ombudsman be sought to help resolve issues?

- When issues arise regarding consumer rights or the quality of care or treatment from a long-term facility. Additionally, when concern involving transfer, discharges, discontinuance, or changes in services for residents occur.
- The Ombudsman will investigate concerns and explore ways to arrive at a resolution.



**Remember!**  
**Ombudsman services are  
confidential and free!**

**Office of the State  
Long-Term Care Ombudsman  
PA Department of Aging**

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**[www.aging.state.pa.us](http://www.aging.state.pa.us)**

For more information on the Ombudsman program in your area or on the Ombudsman volunteer program, contact your local Area Agency on Aging.

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