
What is an Ombudsman?

“Ombudsman” is a Swedish term for a person who acts as a citizen representative. The Long Term Care Ombudsman is an advocate whose goal is to promote the highest possible quality of life and care for residents living in long term care facilities. The Ombudsman helps residents to resolve problems within the long term care environment.

Who Can Use the Ombudsman Service?

- Residents of all licensed long term care facilities in Montgomery County
- Friends and relatives of residents
- Facility staff and administrators
- Public agencies
- Senior citizen groups
- Any person or group interested in resident well being

An Advocacy Service for Long Term Care Facility Residents

Federally funded under the Older Americans Act, with state and county funding supplements. There is no fee for this service.

What Does the Ombudsman Program Do for Long Term Care Residents?

- **ENSURES** understanding and implementation of residents' legal rights.
- **RECEIVES** and seeks to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of long term care residents.
- **ENCOURAGES** self-advocacy and provides assistance and support until problems are resolved.
- **PROVIDES** access to service through visits by volunteer ombudsmen and program staff.
- **PROVIDES** training and continuing education for volunteer ombudsmen.
- **PROTECTS** the privacy and confidentiality of residents, their families and others who utilize the ombudsman service.
- **PROVIDES** information and referral services regarding long term care issues.
- **EDUCATES** the community about long term care facilities and systems.
- **IDENTIFIES** and seeks to remedy gaps in facility, government or community services for long term care residents.
- **ADVOCATES** for improvements in relevant legislation and policy.

Contact

240-777-3369

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ltombudsman

How Did the Ombudsman Program Originate?

As a result of issues raised during the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, The Department of Health, Education and Welfare was charged with developing programs to improve the quality of care for the nation's nursing home residents.

In July 1973, the Nursing Home Ombudsman Program was transferred to the Administration on Aging and by 1975 ombudsman programs had been initiated in 47 states. The Older Americans Act Amendments of 1978 made the program mandatory for every state and further defined ombudsman responsibilities in nursing homes. The authority and duties of ombudsman programs were expanded in 1982 to include licensed assisted living facilities.

The Montgomery County Long Term Care Ombudsman Program started in November 1979 providing services to nursing homes and in 1982 extended services to the licensed domiciliary facilities. In May 1997, the program expanded ombudsman services to all licensed assisted living facilities, which added group homes for the elderly to the program.

The effectiveness of the program is dependent on the efforts of dedicated volunteer ombudsmen representatives coordinated by program staff within Montgomery County's Aging and Disability Services.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

Volunteers are continually needed to provide Montgomery County long term care residents with direct access to advocacy services through regular visits to area nursing homes and licensed assisted living facilities. An extensive training program is offered for new volunteers to provide a thorough orientation to the aging process, long term care systems, and advocacy skills. To volunteer call **240-777-3369**.

Residents' Rights

Residents of licensed long term care facilities have special rights under state law. Examples of these rights are:

- Dignity, respect and courtesy.
- Freedom from mental and physical abuse.
- Freedom from chemical or physical restraint.
- A total care plan and complete information about facility services and charges.
- Access to a personal physician and to medical information about diagnosis and treatment, with freedom to accept or refuse such treatment.
- Presentation of grievances and suggestions without fear of reprisal.
- A reasonable response to requests from facility administrator and staff.
- Privacy: in residents medical care program and room; in visits and communications; and in receipt of mail.
- Management of personal finances unless otherwise designated by resident.
- Secure storage and use of personal clothing and possessions.
- Receive treatment, care, and services that are adequate, appropriate and in compliance with relevant state, local and federal laws and regulations.
- Thirty days advance written notice of discharge describing reasons for discharge and appeal rights. A resident may not be transferred or discharged except for medical reasons, his own or other residents' welfare, or for nonpayment. In a licensed assisted living facility, there are no specific appeal rights, unless noted in the contract.



Department of Health and Human Services
Aging and Disability Services
LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM
3950 Ferrara Drive, 2nd Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20906

240-777-3369 PHONE

240-777-1242 FAX

HHSLTCOmbudsman@montgomerycountymd.gov

Department of Health and Human Services
Aging and Disability Services



Do You Have Questions or Concerns About Long Term Care Facilities?

Contact the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

240-777-3369