



A Note from the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman:

As we move into the eighth week of the 2015 Legislative Session and the March 6 deadline for moving bills out of committee approaches, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is closely monitoring several bills that have the potential to impact the lives of residents and tenants residing in Iowa's long-term care facilities.

As of today, there are 34 bills and study bills that we are watching that deal with issues ranging from elder abuse and guardianship to transition planning, insurance benefits and voting. On the surface, it appears that the pending legislation is quite diverse in terms of how it may affect Iowans, but upon closer examination, a common theme is revealed: protecting the rights of the individual.

This is the cornerstone of what the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman was established to achieve. While residents and tenants of the state's long-term care facilities may have to make some adjustments to their lifestyles in order to reside in a nursing facility, assisted living program, residential care facility or elder group home, they never lose their rights as American citizens and we must do everything we can to ensure their safety, welfare and quality of life and care.

If you are interested in learning more about pending legislation and how you can advocate on behalf of Iowa's long-term care residents and tenants, I encourage you to visit the Iowa Legislature's website at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation> to track bills and contact your legislators to let them know how you feel they should vote.

After all, every voice matters.



Respecting the Rights of LGBT Residents and Tenants Living in Long-Term Care Facilities



Research estimates the number of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans over the age of 65 will increase from 3 to 7 million over the next 25 years. But even in Iowa, where marriage is legal between two men or two women, LGBT Baby Boomers are hesitant about seeking long-term care services and supports.

One study found approximately 27 percent of LGBT individuals in their 50s and 60s have significant concerns about experiencing discrimination as they age. Many cited harassment by staff or other residents, visitation refusals, inadequate care, isolation, reprisal and/or refusal to recognize a partner among their greatest fears. Another study found approximately 90 percent of LGBT respondents felt long-term care staff would discriminate against someone who “came out” in a facility (as it is, only 25 LGBT-focused retirement communities exist in the United States today).

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OSLTCO) aims to ensure equal treatment and positive quality of life for all long-term care residents and tenants regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. In order to promote a culture of openness and acceptance of LGBT residents and tenants, the OSLTCO offers the following recommendations for long-term care facilities:

- Advise residents, tenants, families and staff on LGBT residents’ rights and make it clear that anti-LGBT discrimination will not be tolerated.
- Mandate diversity awareness and sensitivity training for staff and provide opportunities to discuss sensitive issues pertaining to prejudices, biases, cultural conflicts, stereotypes and cultural lenses. Conduct these trainings on a regular and consistent basis.
- Develop policies and strategies for addressing mistreatment of LGBT residents and tenants.
- Provide contacts and information on support networks, resources and relevant agencies for addressing questions and concerns related to LGBT rights in long-term care.
- Advocate for acceptance at the highest level. Where administration outwardly promotes attitudes of acceptance of LGBT residents and tenants, staff is likely to adopt these principals.
- Ask your Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman how you can become a stronger advocate for protecting the rights of LGBT residents and tenants.

OSLTCO to Speak at OSDM Summits This Week

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman has been invited to speak at the Office of Substitute Decision Maker (OSDM) Summit on Tuesday, March 3, in Iowa City and Wednesday, March 4, in Council Bluffs.

The event, which is designed for attorneys but may also be useful for social workers, aging and disability network providers and others, will take place from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. each day (see details below). The focus will be substitute decision-making in Iowa and presentations will include older adult rights in long-term care facilities and alternatives to guardianships and conservatorships.

Pre-registration is encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome. The per-person cost of \$15 will cover the cost of a catered box lunch. To register, visit <https://sdm-iowa.eventbrite.com> or call (515) 725-3333.

Tuesday, March 3, 2015
University of Iowa

Boyd Law Building
130 Byington Road
Iowa City, IA 52242

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

Ameristar Casino Hotel
Conference Center
2200 River Road
Council Bluffs, IA 51501

Nursing Facility Leaders Asked to Participate in Rights and Information Survey

In an effort to identify educational topics and resources that would be beneficial to residents of nursing facilities, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is conducting a Rights and Information Survey and respectfully requests all administrators and employees in leadership roles to participate.



Full participation requires completion of two surveys within a one-year period. If you agree to complete the first survey you will be contacted by a representative of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman in approximately one year to complete a second survey. Each survey will take approximately five minutes to complete.

Individual survey responses will not be shared with anyone outside the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Personally identifiable information (name, title, facility) will be used solely for the purpose of contacting participants in the future for the second survey.

If you have any questions or would like a paper copy of the survey, please contact Merea Bentrott at (515) 344-0052 or Merea.Bentrott@iowa.gov.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this important project. We appreciate your feedback and value your commitment to improving the quality of life of the Iowans we all serve.

> [Take the Survey Now](#)

Updated to MDS Section Q Fact Sheet

Please see the [MDS Section Q Informational Sheet for Nursing Facilities](#) posted on our website for updated instructions on how to make a Section Q referral to Iowa Medicaid Enterprise and your regional Area Agency on Aging.

Welcome New Volunteer Ombudsmen

Please join us in welcoming the following new members of the Volunteer Ombudsman Program:

- Theresa Baldus-Kokontis, Linn Manor Care Center (Marion)
- Barb Buchanan, Living Center West (Cedar Rapids)
- Joan Fix, Good Shepherd Health Center (Mason City)
- Andrea Lewerenz-Norris, Mercy Medical Center – Hallmar Unit (Cedar Rapids)
- Doug Nelson, Sheffield Care Center (Sheffield)
- Suzanne Rye, Oakwood Care Center (Clear Lake)

- Diane Setka, Cresco Care Center (Cresco)

For more information about the program, visit <https://www.iowaaging.gov/VOP>.

The mission of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of individuals residing in long-term care by investigating complaints, seeking resolutions to problems and providing advocacy, with the goal of enhancing quality of life and care.