



## **A note from the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman:**

May is Older Americans Month, and this year's theme - "Blaze a Trail" - is designed to raise awareness about important issues facing older adults by highlighting the many ways that individuals are advocating for themselves, their peers and their communities.

This work is something the Office of the State Long-Term Ombudsman is proud to support - not just in May, but throughout the year - because we recognize that standing up for yourself or others can be a very hard thing to do, but is essential if we want to significantly improve the quality of life and care for older adults. This is true whether you are the administrator of a nursing facility, the leader of an advocacy organization, a community volunteer (like our Volunteer Ombudsmen) or a concerned family member or neighbor.

This May, in addition to showing special appreciation to the older adults you serve, work alongside or care for, I hope you will take a moment to think about the trail you can blaze through advocacy efforts and do something, however small, to help your community become



a healthier, safer or more welcoming place for older Iowans. Every bit helps, and even the smallest act can make a significant impact.

In addition, May is also the month to celebrate Mother's Day (May 8), Memorial Day (May 25), National EMS Week (May 15-21) and National Police Week (May 15-21), with Peace Officer Day on May 15. Our Office would like to honor all of those living in long-term care facilities who are mothers, veterans or former police or peace officers or EMS workers, as well recognize all of those who are currently serving in these roles. We appreciate your service.

Deanna Clingan-Fischer, JD

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## Older Americans Month activities scheduled throughout Iowa

Many communities across Iowa are celebrating Older Americans Month and are collaborating with Iowa's six Area Agencies on Aging to make their events more memorable. Here is a snapshot of how Iowa plans to "Blaze a Trail" this May:



- **Polk County Senior Fest (May 18)**  
This event usually draws more than 1,500 participants for information, health screenings and a picnic lunch
- **Seniors in Story Expo (May 20)**  
This event usually draws close to 600 participants for information and health screenings
- **Elderbridge Walk (May 26)**  
Walks are scheduled to start at 11 a.m. in nine communities in the Elderbridge Area Agency on Aging service area
- **NEI3A Walk (May 26)**  
This "friend-raiser" includes a one-mile walk that is hosted in more than 30 communities that the Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging serves, averaging about 1,500 walkers and about 60 sponsors and partners

For more information or to see if an event is planned near you, visit the [i4a website](#).

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## Your participation requested for a statewide survey on elder abuse

The federal government recently awarded the Iowa Attorney General's Office a three-year, \$399,994 grant to aid in the fight against abuse in later life. In addition to expanding victims services, a portion of the funds awarded will be used to train law enforcement officers, judges, prosecutors and others regarding the proper investigation and prosecution of



abuse cases involving older adults.

To meet this goal, the Iowa Attorney General's Office is working closely with the Iowa Department on Aging, the Iowa Department of Public Safety, the Polk County Attorney's Office, the Polk County Sheriff's Office, the Dallas County Attorney's Office and the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence. But your help is needed.

Professionals and service providers are being sought to complete a [brief survey](#) that will provide information essential for identifying gaps in services for older victims of abuse and prioritizing needs in Iowa. Your time and thoughts are valued, and your assistance with this very important work is appreciated.

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## Upcoming Events & Educational Opportunities

### Iowa Governor's Conference on Aging & Disabilities

There's still time to register for this conference, which will take place May 23-26 at the Iowa Events Center. Pre-conference intensives, including one on Elder Law that is being presented by the Iowa State Bar Association and The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, are included in the cost of registration, along with CEUs for Nursing Home Administrators and Social Workers. Special discounts and group rates are also available. > [Register](#)

### Using Improv to Improve Life with Alzheimer's

Improv artists Karen Stobbe and Mondy Carter recently gave a TED MED Talk about how they use the rules of improvisation to break through conventional caregiving techniques and open up new worlds for individuals with dementia. Karen and Mondy's technique was also featured on an [episode](#) of *This American Life* on NPR. > [Watch the TED MED Talk](#)

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*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.*

*Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may be interested.*