

The Advocate E-Newsletter - July 4, 2016



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A note from the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman:

The Fourth of July is an extremely special holiday in any year, as it commemorates America's fight for independence and honors all the brave men and women who have ever served in the United States military to protect and defend our great nation.

But because 2016 is a Presidential election year, July 4 this year is an especially opportune time to recognize all of the rights and patriotic responsibilities that come with being an American, including the right to vote.



While many people take the right to vote for granted and really don't give it much thought until it's time to head to the polls, it is especially meaningful to residents of long-term care facilities. Participating in the political process is a social activity that gets residents involved with their community and empowers them to advocate for themselves.

These benefits are some of the reasons why the older population tends to account for such a large percentage of voters in most elections, but residents of long-term care facilities often have a harder time accessing voting locations due to mobility, health and other issues that inhibit their ability to vote.

Later this year, the National Consumer Voice will celebrate Residents' Rights Month with the theme "My Vote Matters" in an effort to raise awareness about how aging and disability

advocates can help residents in long-term care facilities exercise their right to vote. But there's no need to wait until October to start communicating and encouraging the right to vote among residents and their families.

In the months between now and November, each issue of *The Advocate* will feature at least one way to promote voting in long-term care facilities. In addition, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman will be available to answer questions regarding the voting process or to provide information to long-term care residents about exercising their right to vote.

This Independence Day, in addition to thanking U.S. veterans, service members and their families for their dedication and sacrifice in protecting the freedoms of all American citizens, I hope you will join me in acknowledging the right and responsibility to vote. Thank you, and have a safe and happy holiday!

Deanna Clingan-Fischer, JD

My Vote Matters: Plan a Voter Education Event at Your Long-Term Care Facility

Planning and coordinating a candidates' forum at your long-term care facility is a great way to educate residents about current issues and encourage them to ask questions, form opinions and, ultimately, vote in the upcoming election.



This [guide](#) from the National Consumer Voice details the steps you'll need to take to set up a candidates' forum and provides suggestions on getting residents involved. More information is also available on the [National Consumer Voice website](#).

Highlights from the 2016 Legislative Session

With the Governor's signature on the final bills of the 2016 Legislative Session, the 86th General Assembly has officially ended.



The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman closely monitored a number of bills, but the most significant piece of legislation passed this year was the Health and Human Services Appropriations bill ([HF 2460](#)). The HHS budget bill appropriates \$1.8 billion for various health and human services programs, including Medicaid (\$3.5 million increase). It also appropriates \$439 million from other funds (special accounts for health care and federal block grants), which is a \$7.6 million increase, and reallocates \$15 million that was not spent this year.

Among the most important sections for aging and disability advocates:

Aging:

- Adds \$1 million new appropriation for aging and disability resource centers (LifeLong Links).
- Increases the Office of Substitute Decision Maker by \$61,334 (\$350,000 total).
- Extends the date for statewide coverage for local substitute decision maker offices until July 1, 2018 (was to be established by July 1, 2017).
- Increases the funding for elder abuse specialists in area agencies on aging by \$87,537 (\$612,537 total).

Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OSLTCO):

- Increases funding by \$100,000 to employ one additional long-term care ombudsman to provide assistance and advocacy for persons receiving Medicaid managed care long-term services and supports.
- Adds the OSLTCO to the state Medical Assistance Advisory Council (MAAC) as a non-voting member;
- Adds policy language pertaining to the Managed Care Ombudsman Program created in Iowa Code 231.44 to create a parallel structure as established for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program through the Older Americans Act.

Look for future issues of *The Advocate* to include details of other bills passed during this Legislative Session that deal with key policies affecting the health, safety, welfare or rights of those served by the OSLTCO.

Resident-to-Resident Mistreatment in Long-Term Care Facilities

On June 15, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day helped raise public awareness about several types of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. But one form of elder abuse often gets overlooked since the perpetrators, themselves, are older adults: resident-to-resident mistreatment.



Resident-to-resident mistreatment is defined as negative, often aggressive, interactions between residents in long-term care communities. These incidents include physical, verbal and sexual abuse, and are likely to cause emotional and/or physical harm. Examples of resident-to-resident mistreatment include:

- Roommate conflicts;
- Invasion of privacy and personal space;
- Verbal threats and harassment;
- Unwanted sexual behavior;
- Using personal property without permission; or
- Destruction of personal property.

Some residents may have dementia or another mental health issue that impacts their choices and behavior, but all residents have the right to be protected from mistreatment and facilities are required to investigate reports of abuse.

If you would like more information on resident-to-resident mistreatment or ways to identify and prevent it in your facility, please contact the Office of the State Long-Term Care

Ombudsman at (866) 236-1430.

Coming Soon...

A revised poster will soon be arriving at your facility or program that meets the requirement of Iowa Code 231.42(13), which states: "Every long-term care facility, assisted living program, and elder group home shall post information in a prominent location that includes the name, address, and telephone number and a brief description of the services provided by the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. The information posted shall be approved or provided by the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman."



Upon receipt, please post this in a prominent location within the facility or program. If you would like additional copies, please contact pat.wyatt@iowa.gov.

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.