

The Advocate - September 2020



September 2020



Note from the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

September is the transition from summer to fall. Sometimes it is a gentle process and sometimes sudden. If we have learned one thing over the past few months, the days fly too quickly. Now we find ourselves thinking that before we knew it summer has become just a memory. While most of us think that it might be a bit too soon to think about the mechanics of casting our votes, it is not. This is especially true for long-term care settings. All long-term care facility management should be aware that they have a duty to ensure the right to vote is facilitated for someone living in long-term care. In the past, you may have facilitated a resident's right to vote by ensuring that they got to the polls. Given that COVID-19 has changed just about everything that we normally do, is that a realistic option this year? In the past, absentee ballots may have been provided to the residents in person by bipartisan teams from the county auditor's office. Will staff from the auditor's office be allowed in facilities if visitors and ombudsman are not? Residents may opt for mail in voting. Who can help them with questions or provide assistance if the residents need it? Is there someone on your staff today that can help a resident fill out a ballot request form if they need assistance with that?

These are all things that need to be worked out, and worked out now. Has your county auditor's office reached out to you to let you know if there is a designated contact at the auditor's office to assist you in getting a voting process in place for the residents? If so, do you know who that person is and how to contact them? Have you considered a designated staff member who can answer residents' voting questions or can make arrangements for assistance if they need assistance with the ballot?

You may be thinking, "for heaven sake, we just had Labor Day". While it seems that there is plenty of time before balloting begins to address these matters, remember how this summer has flown by? Time for voting will be upon us faster than we realize, and we all have a duty to ensure that residents have the right to exercise the most fundamental constitutional right afforded to Americans. Older Americans take voting very seriously. For those older Americans living in long-term care facilities much has been taken away from them this year, including their right of association with those they love. More than ever, residents need to be assured that their treasured right to vote will not fall victim to the COVID-19 virus. It is imperative that plans be put in place now so that there is no impediment to any residents' exercise of their prized right to vote in the upcoming election.

Voting in the Upcoming Election

The Iowa Secretary of State's Office has as [webpage](#) directed towards voting in health care facilities. Be sure to have residents and tenants make ballot requests prior to the Friday, October 30, 2020 at 5:00 pm. The [ballot request form](#) is on their website just print, sign, and mail to the [County Auditor](#).

New Staff Member

I am pleased to announce that Pam Mollenhauer has joined the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman as the Empowerment Specialist. In this capacity, Pam will be working with residents to develop and support resident councils as established under the OAA.

Pam has a degree in environmental health and a B/A in Business Administration and Marketing. Pam has worked in Training, Education and Outreach at the State Hygienic Lab and was also the Director of the Office of Public Policy at the State Hygienic Lab. Since April of 2019 Pam has worked at the Iowa Department on Aging as a Program Planner 3 as the State and Area Plan Manager and Community Engagement Liaison.

Pam can be reached at 1-866-236-1430.



News & Resources

Elder abuse reporting can be intimidating, but the Office of Inspector General wants to receive your tips regarding any fraud or harm to someone in an elder care setting. They urge **if you see it, report it** on their [informational sheet](#): 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477) or [online](#).



Resident/Tenant Rights

Residents' Rights Month

Residents' challenge shared in [July's The Advocate newsletter](#) are due September 11, 2020 and may be emailed to info@theconsumervoice.org or sent to

Consumer Voice
Attn: Resident's Voice Challenge
1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 632
Washington, DC 20036

In preparation for Residents' Rights Month there are PDF sheets available to print in 15 languages on The Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care's [website](#).

To celebrate Residents' Rights Month, activity directors can look what is offered to long-term care facilities during COVID-19. Consumer Voice published [Staying Connected](#) an activity book and the follow McKnights [article](#) showcased a few ideas such as in-door golf and hallway ice cream socials. The following [webcast](#) was held on August 25 on *Creative Engagement: Successful Approaches to Creatively Engage Older Adults*.

Wheatland Manor residents in Clinton County became social media celebrities by sharing their wisdom with younger generations in this [article](#).

One pen pal call on Facebook from Texas yielded a special delivery for one resident who requested a pen pal that enjoys Dr. Pepper and their family. Dr. Pepper in Waco sent special edition bottles and 16 cases of the soda-pop beverage to the resident at the nursing home in this article.



Resident/Tenant Health, Safety & Welfare

Antigen testing is a new type of COVID-19 diagnostic test. Currently, this type of testing is being used in health care settings including long-term care facilities in Iowa. Negative and positive results are now included in the State of Iowa's COVID-19 case reporting and calculation of positivity. For further information view the Iowa Department of Public Health's [media release](#).

Testing requirements for staff and residents have more direction as the [interim final rule](#) from CMS was issued on August 25, 2020. The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care summarized the rule and regulations on its [website](#). The rule is effective as of September 2, 2020.

Wearing a mask and seeing caregivers in full PPE dress can be frightening or alarming to residents, but especially those with dementia. This [article](#) gives some simple tips to keep in mind when working with this population such as enunciating when speaking with a mask on the caregiver's face, asking for the resident's assistance to keep people safe or spraying lavender on a mask for a resident.

In light of the Derecho, natural disasters and other emergencies that may arise such as COVID-19 take this opportunity to review emergency preparedness plans, replenish any supply kits and have location reviews if in the emergency you must evacuate the facility in a short amount of time.



Involuntary Discharge

Governor Reynolds issued a [proclamation](#) on August 21 that is in effect until 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, September 21, 2020. This proclamation is on our [COVID-19 webpage](#). The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's [COVID-19 webpage](#) contains a wide variety of resources for consumers and facility staff during this time of pandemic.



Volunteer Ombudsman Program

lisa.vanklavern@iowa.gov or 515-971-6294

VOP Statewide Conference Call

This month's statewide call will be held on Wednesday, September 9 at 10:00 am. Volunteer Ombudsman Program Coordinator Lisa Van Klavern will present on residents rights to celebrate the upcoming National Residents' Rights Month in October. Notes from the past calls may also be found on the [website](#). If you do view a recording of a previously

recorded statewide conference call be sure to email volunteervop@iowa.gov to receive one hour of continuing education credit.

VOP CEUs

The featured informational item this time is [The Bookshelf Model of Memory Storage](#). Be sure to fill out the [CEU form](#) if you review this sheet.



Events & Educational Opportunities

During the month of September Consumer Voice will be holding and posting webinars relating to **Understanding Trauma and Ensuring Person-Centered Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic**. These **Person-Centered Care Trainings** for Administrators, Facility Staff and Family Members.

Not Eligible for VOP CEUs

[More Information](#) | [Register](#)

Mouthcare Matters In-Services (*register for one time*)

Eligible for VOP CEUs

Tuesday, Sept. 22 (10 am or 3 pm)

Thursday, Oct. 8 (8:30 am or 3 pm)

via Zoom meeting

[More Information](#) | [Register](#)

Caregiver Wellness Series: Long-Term Care In A Nutshell

Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Pam Railsback will be presenting on long-term care on October 13 for which Volunteer Ombudsman will receive one credit of CEU if they choose to attend.

Oct 13 (1 pm)

[More Information](#) | [Register](#)

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.

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Jessie Parker Building
510 E 12th Street, Ste. 2
Des Moines, IA 50319
515.725.3333 | 866.236.1430
www.iowaaging.gov