

The Advocate - August 2020



August 2020



Note from the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman has been receiving calls from family and friends of residents of long-term care with concerns about the continued visitation restrictions. As most of American society has begun the slow trek toward being able to resume some activities such as going to restaurants, getting haircuts, going to the gym or going to the mall; residents of long-term care and their loved ones are still restricted. The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman sympathizes with just how unfair this must seem to them.

I urge all facilities to take every opportunity to encourage and facilitate virtual visitation. Very many of us have been relying on telecommunication for meetings that used to take place face to face and have become more proficient at using technology on a frequent basis. Many facilities received CMP funds to be able to acquire devices for residents to use for just this purpose. Please find a way to help residents to become more familiar and comfortable with using technology to connect with family and friends outside the facility. Also, please make the most of window visits for residents on days when weather permits. The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman has received complaints about facilities that are prohibiting window visits. It seems a bit spiteful not to allow window visits. There is no concern about transmission of the COVID-19 virus during a closed window visit. For facilities that are more than one story, a room on the ground floor could be designated as the window visit room. Facilities could communicate to family and friends of the residents that visits need to be scheduled so as to accommodate multiple residents having to use the same room for visits at differing times. Furnishings could be kept to a minimum to afford for disinfecting the room between resident visits. Family and friends could also be encouraged to let the facility know when they are planning to visit a resident at their window so that staff can prepare the resident for the visit by assisting them to the window, or alerting the resident that family or friends are coming to the window so the resident is not startled.

When making determinations about in-person compassionate care visits for end-of-life, I would urge facility staff who are making decisions about when to allow in-person compassionate care visits to consider all the circumstances of the families wishing to be with the resident during this time. If family members need to travel to the facility from a great distance, please begin making arrangements for the compassionate care visit to accommodate the travel time family will need. Also, if there are numerous family members needing to visit the resident, determine how that is best accommodated to allow for the needs of the resident and family, as well as to minimize disruption to other residents of the facility.

During this time, it would do us all well to remember the golden rule of do unto others as you would have them do unto you. For facility staff making determinations about visitation for residents please consider how you would like to be treated so that you could remain connected to those you love during this frightening, uncomfortable time. For those residents and loved ones wanting to visit with one another, please consider what steps you would need to take to keep others that have been entrusted into your care, safe from this malicious contagion, about which we still have so much to learn. Then, with an understanding of what the other side is experiencing perhaps we can have productive conversations to meet in the middle until visitation restrictions can be lifted.



News & Resources

Social Security continues to provide services during the pandemic. There is [online access](#) to their services. Social Security may be reached at (800) 772-1213 or consumers may use their [office locator](#). At this time, Social Security is not offering in-person office hours.

Medicare announced that it will give nursing home providers a 2.2% raise in federal fiscal year 2021 view the [article](#) by McKnights for further information.

Broadband service will be expanding in the State of Iowa. \$50,000,000 of the CARES Act money are going to be dispersed in grants for expansion of broadband services across the State in the [Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program](#).



Resident/Tenant Rights

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](#).

Residents' Rights Month

In addition to the residents' challenge shared in [July's The Advocate newsletter](#) there is now an artwork challenge for [postcards](#). Residents and tenants are encouraged to create artwork that will be used for various postcards to send out and stay connected with family and friends. Submissions 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](#).



Resident/Tenant Health, Safety & Welfare

During this time of pandemic it may be tempting to help ease the residents' and tenants' anxiety or depression with the use of prescription drugs. Residents and tenants have the right to be free from chemical restraint. The Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care held a webinar on July 8 entitled *Avoiding Inappropriate Use of Antipsychotic Drugs: Knowing Your Rights*. To view the webinar and slide presentation visit this [webpage](#).

This [recorded discussion](#) entitled *Staying Connected from a Distance to People Living in Long-Term Care* was put on by The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care and Dr. Kim Grier, Grier Dementia Training. This training focused on those tools to use for those with dementia in long-term care. (VOP CEU Eligible)

Provider Long Term & Post Acute Care Magazine published this about a new UV-C machine, "MoonBeam3 enhances manual cleaning and disinfection best practices to reduce the risk of human error by adding a level of disinfection assurance to create a safer environment of care." For additional information see the [article](#).

Activities

Residents at a facility at The Victorian Care Center in North Carolina are seeking out pen pals in the following [article](#). Residents and tenants may want to consider writing to a new friend from out of state.

Children in the Cherokee area are able to color for a friend in long-term care. On August 13, *Color For Friends* will be held at the Sioux Valley Family Health clinic in town. Children and adults are invited to come to the clinic, pick a name of a resident, for whom they have colored a sheet and fill out a note to send with the sheet. Those children who do participate will receive a coupon for a free ice cream cone or sundae at the Dairy Queen in town. Children and adults are both encouraged to color a sheet. For additional information view this news [article](#).

A Resident's Perspective

One resident's [poem](#) about her life during COVID-19 was published by McKnights and is one to remember.



Involuntary Discharge

Governor Reynolds issued a [proclamation](#) on July 24 that is in effect until 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, August 23, 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.vanklavem@iowa.gov or 515-971-6294

VOP Statewide Conference Call

This month's statewide call will be held on Wednesday, August 12 at 2:00 pm. Office of Public Guardian Administrator Jennifer Donovan and Assistant Attorney General Chantelle Smith will present on powers of attorney, guardians and conservators. 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 COVID-19 and Ombudsman Programs: Understanding How Trauma Impacts You, Residents and Your Advocacy webinar series is available for CEUs. The fourth of the four-part series was held on July 29. If you view the [presentation and recording](#) be sure to fill out the [VOP CEU form](#) to receive credit.

The featured webinar/video this time is [Person Centered Care](#). Be sure to fill out the [CEU form](#) if you do attend.

**Onelowa Mental Health Guide to Pride**

Eligible for VOP CEUs

Aug 13 (5:00 pm)

via Zoom meeting

[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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