

## **Who Are Long-Term Care Ombudsman**

Ombudsmen are specially trained and certified persons who advocate for residents in long-term care facilities to protect their quality of life. Long-term care facilities include Nursing Homes, Adult/Assisted Living Homes and Family Type Homes.

## **What are the duties of a Long-Term Care Ombudsman**

- Complete a 36-hour state approved training course which includes:
  - practical understanding and academic knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the ombudsman and the rights of residents;
  - understanding of the physical, emotional and social issues related to the aging process;
  - knowledge of long-term care facilities and their regulatory requirements;
  - communication skills with special emphasis on problem solving techniques; and
  - knowledge of NYS law in connection with guardianship, power of attorney and end of life decision making.
- Devote 2-4 hours per week in an assigned facility to serve as resident advocates and support resident autonomy, health, safety and welfare through skilled observation, trust and understanding.
- Investigate complaints/concerns received from residents or others in a confidential manner and to achieve positive outcomes on their behalf.
- Facilitate educational programs for the community, providers of long term-care and government officials to enhance/create a greater awareness of long-term care and the needs of long-term care residents.
- Coordinate efforts with other regulatory agencies and organizations concerned with long-term care, particularly the Department of Health and Social Services which license and regulate long-term care.
- Identify issues and problem areas in long-term care facilities and recommend needed changes.

## **How Does The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Work**

The State Office for the Aging has established Ombudsman Programs for every county by subcontracting with local agencies in the area to manage the Ombudsman Program at the local level. They also provide legal support and assign Assistant State Ombudsman to work closely with the Agency Directors.

The Agency Director is responsible for the local program and for the recruitment, training and supervision of Ombudsman Staff and Ombudsman Volunteers.

The Ombudsman Staff are trained to assist with recruitment, training, supervision and to provide on-going technical support to the volunteers as needed.

The Ombudsman Volunteers are trained, certified and assigned to a facility where they will develop a relationship of trust with the residents to gain knowledge of their concerns/complaints and assist with the resolution of same under the guidance provided by Ombudsman Staff and the Agency Director.

*"This very important program seems to always attract the most talented and dedicated volunteers that it has been our good fortune to associate with." Ellen Ott, Director*