



The National
CONSUMER VOICE
for Quality Long-Term Care
formerly NCCNHR



2020 Annual Report

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Our Vision & Mission

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice) is the leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves. We are a primary source of information and tools for consumers, families, caregivers, advocates, and Ombudsman program representatives to help ensure quality care for the individual.

To carry out our mission, we:

- Advocate for public policies that support quality care and quality of life responsive to consumers' needs in all long-term care settings.
- Empower and educate consumers and families with the knowledge and tools they need to advocate for themselves.
- Train and support individuals and groups that empower and advocate for consumers of long-term care.
- Promote the critical role of direct-care workers and best practices in quality-care delivery.

The Consumer Voice envisions a world in which all consumers of long-term care, services, and supports are treated with respect and dignity and have a wide range of affordable, quality options across all settings. These options will make it possible for individuals to receive care and services in the location and manner of their choice and to attain a high quality of life.

Consumer Voice Staff

Lori Smetanka, J.D., *Executive Director*

Robyn Grant, M.S.W., *Director, Public Policy and Advocacy*

Amity Overall-Laib, M.A., *Director, National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center*

Jocelyn Bogdan, J.D., *Program and Policy Specialist*

Sam Brooks, J.D., *Project Manager*

Carol Scott, *Ombudsman Specialist*

Alejandra Ona, M.S., *Manager of Finance and Operations*

Christina Steier, *Communications and Membership Coordinator*

Katie Kohler, *Associate, Program and Outreach*

Libby Laubert, *Program Associate*

Jamie Freschi, *Consultant*

Maria Greene, *Consultant*

Michelle Gralnick, *Consultant*

Liam Kohler, M.P.A., *Consultant*



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University of Massachusetts Boston

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Ombudsman

Alana Russell
Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc.

Sarah Slocum
Center for Eldercare Improvement
Altarum

Joy Nathan Stern
Family Advocate

Dick Weinman
Long-Term Care Resident
Consumer Advocate

Jennifer Williams-Woods
Nevada State Long-Term Care
Ombudsman

Protecting residents during COVID-19

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, Consumer Voice advocated for support and protection for residents; raised awareness about the resident experience, including the significant impact of isolation and separation from family caregivers; and kept our network of consumers and advocates informed of the latest policies, resources, tools, and tips.

Consumer Voice advocacy centered around:

- The critical need for adequate **PPE, Testing, and Vaccines** for residents and staff to help prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Efforts to **Reunite Residents and Families**, separated due to the visitation ban imposed by federal and state governments, the resulting **isolation and neglect**; and the importance of essential support and compassionate care for residents;
- Reinstatement of **oversight by surveyors** to address serious care issues and rights violations occurring during the pandemic;
- Support for staff, including hazard pay, benefits (e.g., paid sick leave), and training; and
- Public reporting of COVID data in long-term care facilities, i.e., number of cases, deaths, etc.

Opposing immunity for providers

Immunity for long-term care facilities removes necessary protections for residents and increases the risk of harm to residents and staff. A federal proposal would have barred all lawsuits except those showing gross negligence, a standard that is almost impossible to meet, and even would have prohibited lawsuits in cases involving deliberate short staffing and failure to obtain necessary resources to provide quality care. While Consumer Voice and others were successful in defeating immunity at the federal level, it has been given at the state level through executive order or state legislation in the majority of states. Additional advocacy is needed on this issue.

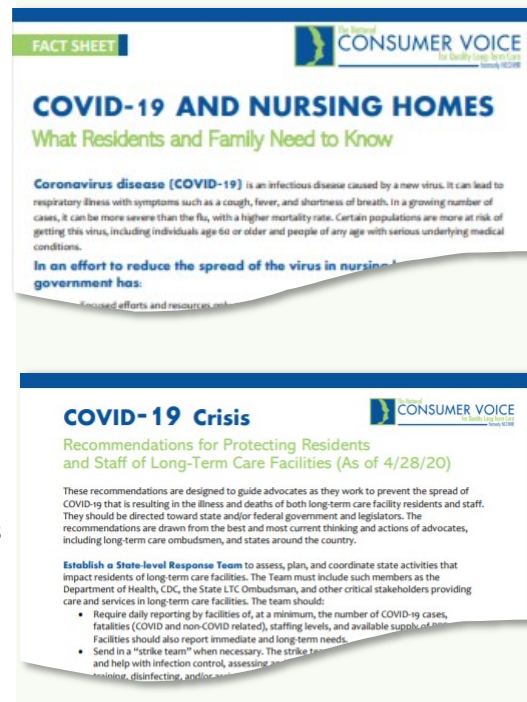
Fighting for better staffing

Although poor staffing has been a chronic problem in nursing homes, it is among the many issues which COVID-19 brought to light in 2020. Consumer Voice advocacy around staffing included:

- Support for **minimum staffing standards** of at least 4.1 hours per resident per day;
- Increasing support for direct care staff by paying a **living wage and benefits**;
- Requiring **registered nurses 24 hours per day**;
- Reinstatement of **training requirements** for certified nurse aides that were waived early in the pandemic; and
- Requiring a full time **infection preventionist** in every nursing home.

Chemical Restraints Consumer Education Campaign

Many residents, particularly those living with dementia, are given off-label antipsychotic drugs to control their behavior rather than individualized care to meet their needs. Through a partnership with AARP Foundation, Consumer Voice is educating consumers about the dangers of antipsychotic drugs, best practices for providing person-centered care, and advocacy strategies when concerns arise.



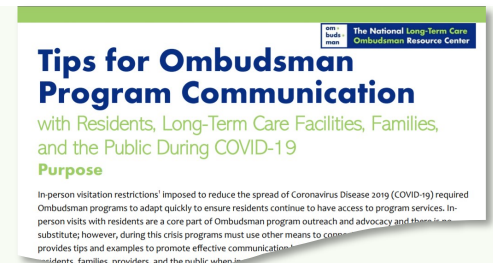
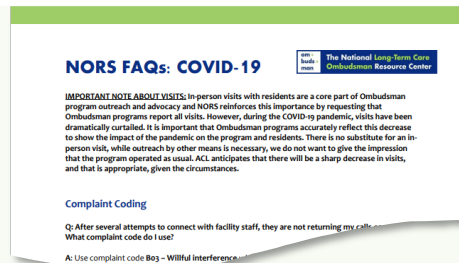
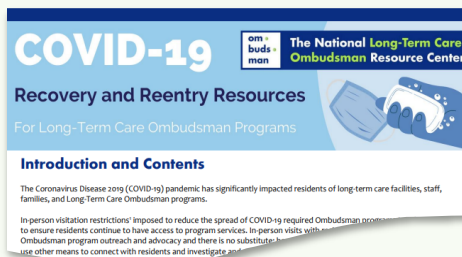
Programs

National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center



Through a grant from the Administration for Community Living, the Consumer Voice operates the National LTC Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC), providing training, technical assistance, and support to the 53 State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs and their regional representatives. NORC activities included:

- Weekly calls with State Ombudsmen to share updates and strategies for programs and management and advocacy for residents during COVID-19;
- Development of COVID-19 resources and training including reentry to facilities, safety considerations, responding to complaints, communication, and the impact of trauma and self-care;
- Training, resources, and support for NORS data reporting, including an on-demand training course and release of COVID-19 NORS FAQs;
- Release of an advocacy toolbox on protecting residents from facility-initiated discharges;
- Multiple webinars and trainings for State Ombudsmen and program representatives, including the State Ombudsman Training Conference.

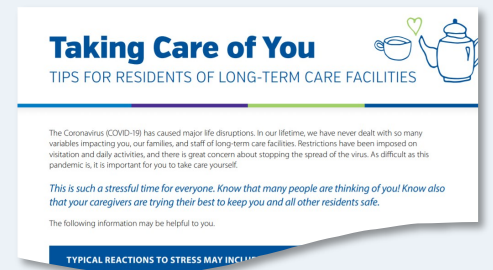
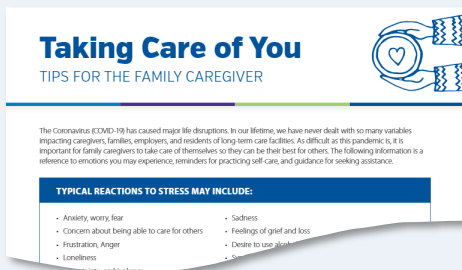


Preventing Inappropriate Transfer-Discharge

Complaints regarding nursing facility-initiated discharges have been the top complaint made to State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs for more than 7 years. The Consumer Voice is working with the states of California and Utah to develop training, resources, and consumer information about discharge requirements and rights. More information will be shared in 2021.

Elder Abuse Prevention and Response

As a partner with the National Center on Elder Abuse, the Consumer Voice develops resources and information for consumers and others about the prevention of elder abuse and neglect. Fact sheets, webinars, and podcast recordings are available on the Consumer Voice website.



Education and Outreach

Consumer Voice in the News



Quoted or mentioned in more than **90** articles or news reports.

“ We really do as a society need to relook at how we are providing long-term care in this country...Looking at how we can better ensure quality care in a way that meets the residents’ needs and protects them from things like we’re experiencing today.

- *Lori Smetanka, KUNR*

“ [W]e need a much stronger oversight and enforcement system, because you have a system that’s basically permitting problems to continue year after year, and we are paying the consequences right now.

- *Robyn Grant, Loudoun Times*

Consumer Voice Annual Conference



643 registrants

5 plenary sessions

24 workshops

14 discussion lounges

6 networking sessions

16 sponsors

17 exhibitors

Webinars



Reached **41,047** individuals through **36** webinars.

Technical Assistance Requests



Responded to **2,138** requests for technical assistance and information.

Top 5 request categories:

- COVID-19
- Quality Care Issues
- Ombudsman Program Management
- Issues with Long-Term Care Provider
- Quality of Life Issues

Pursuing Quality Long-Term Care Podcast



Launched our podcast and reached **7,632** listeners.

Residents’ Rights Month



Connection Matters
NATIONAL OMBUDSMAN
WORKS FOR QUALITY
LONG-TERM CARE

133 Resident’s Voice Challenge Submissions.

Website and Social Media

TWITTER

301 tweets
186,684 impressions

FACEBOOK

440 posts
15,788 page views

CV WEBSITE

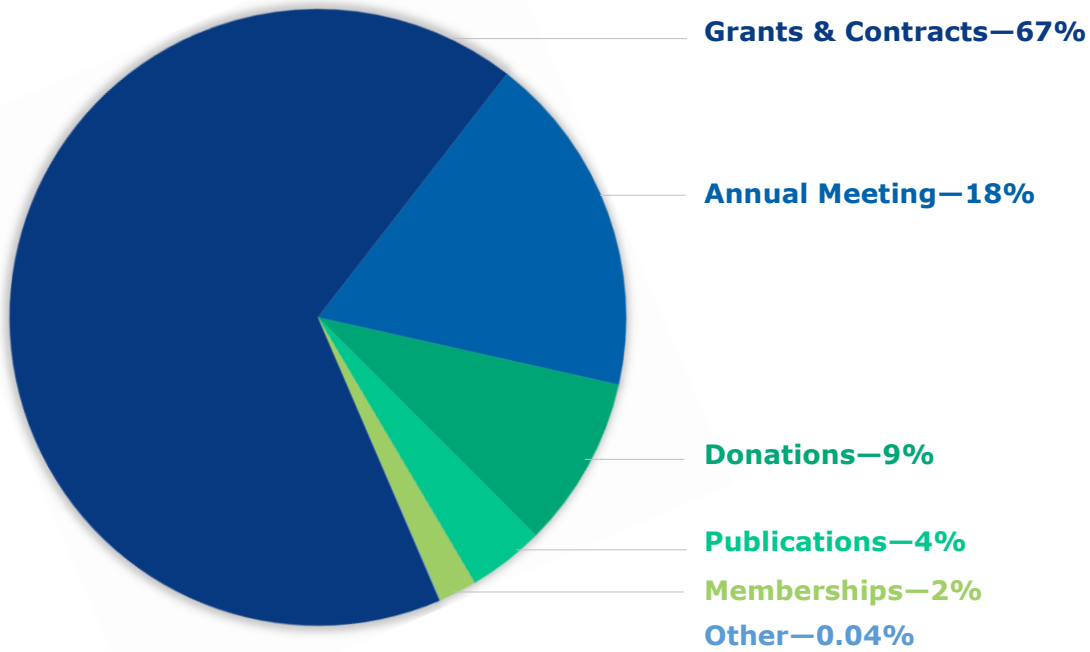
148,000 website visits

NORC WEBSITE

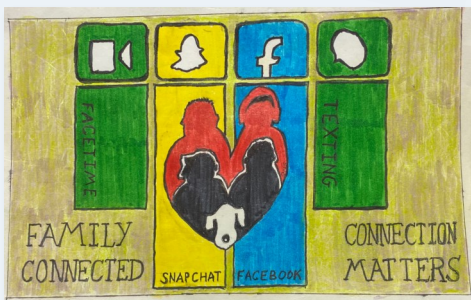
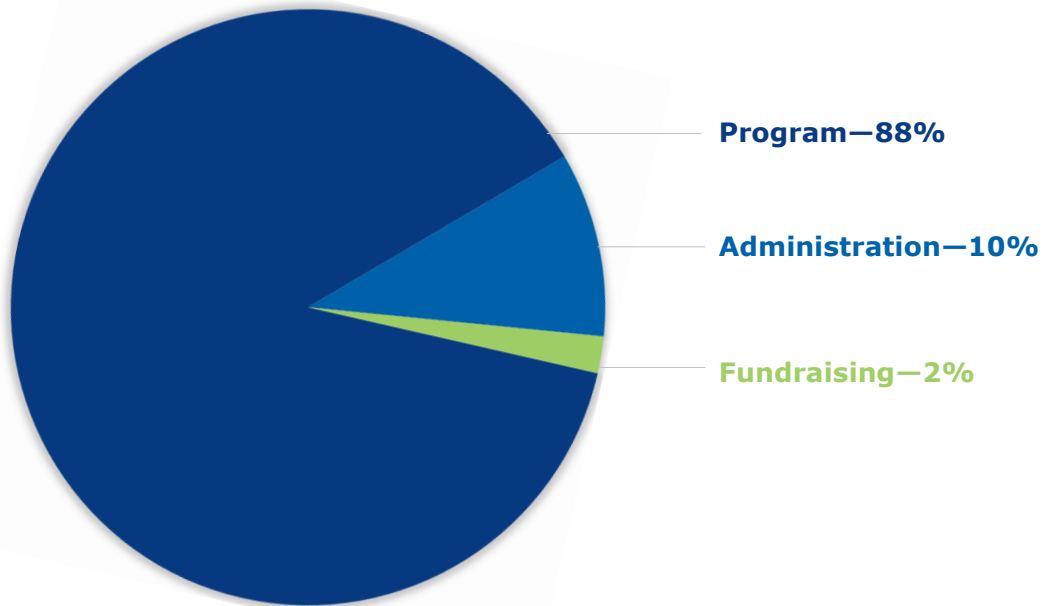
90,000 website visits

FY2020 Financials

Total Revenue—\$1,293,771



Total Expenses—\$1,131,914



By Oscar Nieves Sanchez, Resident's Voice Challenge submission



Sailing in the Cove at Dusk
By Gwendee Lichvar, Resident's Voice Challenge Submission

Thank you to all our donors and funders.

Your support makes a difference!

Grants/Contracts funded by:

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| AARP | Frances Lane Memorial Family Council | NORC at the University of Chicago |
| AARP Foundation | Fund of the Edward H Lane Foundation | Nursing Home Litigation Group of the American Association for Justice |
| Administration for Community Living | NAELA Foundation | |
| California Department of Public Health | NCEA | Utah Department of Health |

Conference Sponsors

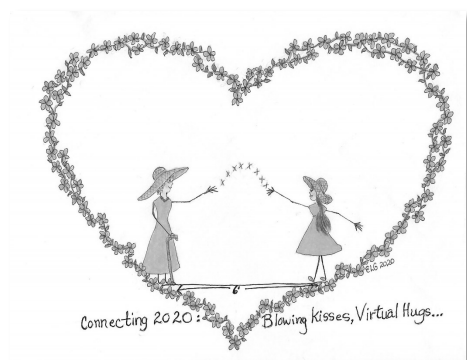
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| AARP | Barbara Frank | NAAP | PeerPlace |
| AARP Foundation | Justice in Aging | NALLTCO | Patricia Powers |
| California State Long-Term Care Program | Levin & Perconti | NASW | Elma Holder Stallings |
| | MANHR | NCEA | WISER |

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President's Circle members are individuals who have donated \$1,000 or more in a calendar year.

| | | | |
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| Barbara Frank | Cathy Hurwit | Judith Peres | |
| Iris Freeman | Mary Ellen Jacobs | Patricia Powers | |

If you would like to support Consumer Voice's advocacy for long-term care residents, visit our [donation page](#).



By Betsy Greene, Resident's Voice Challenge submission



*Pathways, created using wheelchair wheels
By clients at Kula Hospital, Resident's Voice Challenge Submission*