**Sample Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor:

October is National Long-Term Care Residents’ Rights Month, a time to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices many long-term care (LTC) residents have made to better our community and to call attention to the rights of residents in long-term care facilities. The theme for Residents' Rights Month 2019 is - **“Stand for Quality”–** to emphasize the importance of standing for quality in all aspects of residents’ experiences. “We want to emphasize the importance of quality in all aspects of residents’ experiences – quality care, quality of life, quality services, and quality choices – to name a few, and we want to encourage residents, as well as family members, long-term care ombudsmen, facility staff and other advocates, to work together to stand for and promote quality,” said Lori Smetanka, Executive Director of the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care.

Residents’ Rights Month is an opportunity to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect and the rights of each resident. The federal Nursing Home Reform Law guarantees residents’ rights and places a strong emphasis on individual dignity, choice, and self-determination. The law also requires nursing homes to “promote and protect the rights of each resident”. Residents’ Rights Month is a time to raise awareness of these rights and celebrate residents.

Celebrate and acknowledge these rights by participating in Residents’ Rights Month events and calling on your elected officials, community members and local facilities to show their support by attending or organizing activities.

**<Insert details of your local Residents’ Rights Month event - be sure to note any proclamations from elected officials.>**

During Residents’ Rights Month, we recognize our local long-term care ombudsman program staff and volunteers, who work daily to promote residents’ rights, assist residents with complaints and provide information to those who need to find a long-term care facility. In this area, the ombudsman program serves **<Insert details about the size of the region, the number of facilities, and how to contact the ombudsman>.**

Our community is also served by a citizen advocacy group **<Insert name and contact information>** that advocates for improved quality of care and quality of life for those who live in long-term care facilities.

As **<Insert name of locality>** celebrates Residents’ Rights, I encourage community members to visit those they know in a long-term care facility, volunteer in a facility, participate in Residents’ Rights Month events or inquire about becoming a volunteer long-term care ombudsman. Your assistance and attention help to ensure that the voices of long-term care residents do not go unheard and demonstrates to residents that they have not been forgotten.

**\*\* NOTE:** All letters to the editor must include a signature, address, and phone number so the paper may contact you with any questions. You may also include your affiliation with an organization if you wish. Your phone number and address will not be printed.