



## National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care 2014 Public Policy Agenda

**Consumer Voice Mission:** 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.

Our public policy agenda is organized around four goals that stem from our mission. Within each goal, policy issues to be addressed over the next 12-24 months are identified. We take action on these issues through our advocacy activities, which include educating and influencing policy makers, educating and empowering consumers and their families to advocate for themselves, and supporting the work of long-term care ombudsmen, citizen advocacy groups and independent advocates.

**Goal #1: Advocate for public policies that support quality care and quality of life responsive to long-term care consumers' needs.**

**In the next 12-24 months,**

**The Consumer Voice will:**

1. Advocate against inappropriate use of antipsychotic medications, particularly for residents with dementia, and for person-centered care to meet residents' needs.
2. Advocate against the sale and use of adult portable bed rails and related products that result in consumer injuries and deaths and for person-centered care to meet the needs of consumers.
3. Seek implementation of the Affordable Care Act provision requiring staffing information to be collected through payroll data and legislation increasing staffing in nursing homes to 4.1 hours of direct care nursing (nurse and nursing assistant) time per resident per day.
4. Work to eliminate binding mandatory arbitration clauses in long-term care contracts and oppose proposals that would make it more difficult for long-term care consumers to seek legal remedies.
5. Advocate for strong federal monitoring of states' managed long-term care initiatives as well as for strong individual state monitoring of managed long-term care plans.
6. Advocate for improved training, wages, benefits, retention and workplace culture for the direct care workforce.
7. Advocate for nursing home residents to have meaningful choices regarding nursing home transitions.

**Goal #2: To develop, fund, strengthen and preserve programs, laws, and regulations that provide services for and protect long-term care consumers.**

**In the next 12-24 months,**

**The Consumer Voice will:**

1. Advocate for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, including amendments that preserve and strengthen elder rights, in particular the long-term care ombudsman program.
2. Advocate to preserve the Nursing Home Reform Law of OBRA '87 and the Requirements of Participation.
3. Advocate for stronger, effective enforcement of the Requirements of Participation by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
4. Advocate for strong rules and regulations regarding managed long-term care plans
5. Advocate for effective implementation of all long-term care provisions in the Affordable Care Act (such as Nursing Home Transparency, Elder Justice Act, Community First Choice).
6. Work to preserve and ensure that funding is adequate for Older Americans Act, Medicaid and Medicare programs, transparency, federal and state oversight and enforcement, including monitoring the impact of sequestration on these programs and long-term care consumers.

**Goal #3: To ensure a strong and independent long-term care ombudsman program.**

**In the next 12-24 months,**

**The Consumer Voice will:**

1. Advocate for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, with amendments safeguarding programs from interference and retaliation and addressing, organizational and individual conflict of interest, duties and training.
2. Seek increased funding to meet the current mandates of the Older Americans Act for the ombudsman program and for the National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center, including monitoring the impact of sequestration on ombudsman programs.
3. Advocate for strong regulations and guidance from the Administration on Aging to ensure full and effective implementation of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
4. Advocate for expansion of the long-term care ombudsman program into home and community-based services with adequate funding for full and effective implementation.

Goal #4: To advocate for the establishment and enforcement of long-term care consumers' rights.

**In the next 12-24 months,**

**The Consumer Voice will:**

1. Advocate for a federal home care bill of rights that includes such provisions as the right to appeal a decision to terminate services and the right to voice grievances without fear of retaliation and to have the provider promptly investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint.
2. Seek consumer rights and protections, including an independent ombudsman/advocate in all Medicaid and waiver services, as well as managed long-term care programs.
3. Ensure nursing home residents have full and unimpeded access and visitation rights as required under the Nursing Home Reform Law.
4. Advocate for consumer rights and protections in assisted living facilities.