



RESIDENT COUNCIL RIGHTS IN NURSING HOMES

The Nursing Home Reform Law guarantees nursing home residents a number of important rights to enhance their nursing home experience and improve facility-wide services and conditions. Key among these rights is the right to form and hold regular private meetings of an organized group called a resident council.

Facilities certified for Medicare and Medicaid must provide a meeting space and respond to the council's concerns. Nursing facilities must appoint a council-approved staff advisor or liaison to the resident council, but staff and administrators have access to council meetings only by invitation of the resident council.

Specifically, the federal law includes the following requirements for resident councils:

- The facility must provide a resident council, if one exists, with a private space for meetings.
- The facility must take reasonable steps, with the approval of the resident council, to make residents and family members aware of upcoming meetings in a timely manner.
- The resident council meetings are closed to staff, visitors, and other guests. For staff, visitors, or other guests to attend, the resident council must invite them.
- The facility must provide a designated staff person who is approved by the resident council and the facility to provide assistance and respond to written requests from the resident council.
- The facility must consider the views of a resident council and act promptly upon grievances and recommendations of the resident council concerning issues of resident care and life in the facility.
 - The facility must be able to demonstrate their response and rationale for their response.
 - However, the right to a response does not mean facilities are required to implement every request of the resident council.

For more information and resources on residents' rights
go to, www.theconsumervoice.org.

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1975 by Elma L. Holder to protect the rights, safety and dignity of American's long-term care residents.