



## Upcoming Events

### October

- Residents' Rights Month
- Long-Term Care Planning Month

### November

- Veterans Day
- Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

## DID YOU KNOW



- Residents have a right to use personal belongings.
- Residents have a right to access their personal and medical records.
- Residents have a right to visitors, whether they are relatives, friends, or anyone else of the residents' choosing.
- Residents have a right to manage their own financial affairs.

# — THE RESIDENT ADVOCATE —

The Resident Advocate - a newsletter for residents of long-term care facilities containing news and information on rights and care issues, plus updates on national policy. Please share with your neighbor when you've finished reading this issue!

## Take Your Voice to a Resident Council

Residents have the right to meet as an organized group called a Resident Council. Residents should choose the council leaders, run the meetings, invite guests (including staff and administration), and decide priority issues. A resident council can:

- Discuss concerns about the facility and the care received
- Talk to staff about improvements
- Welcome and support new residents
- Help make life the best it can be for all residents

Get involved in the Resident Council in your facility and ask another resident to go with you to a meeting! Bring your ideas for activities or programs you'd like to see, or concerns you have that need to be resolved. Invite your local ombudsman to talk to the Council about residents' rights. Resident Councils are an important way to be involved.

## Care for the Caregiver by: Dick Weinman



A caregiver **gives** care. But s/he **takes** care, too. In fact, to **get** good care, the resident has to **give** it, as well. All this give and take means that each caregiver and each resident is a unique person with unique needs. From my dozen years as an Assisted Living Facility resident, I've become friends with my caregivers. The young ones tell me their aspirations. The older ones tell me about their families. Many caregivers from the past are friends on *Facebook*.

How come? I compliment them on a job well done. I let them know I appreciate their work. I tell them about the value of their work. I try to understand the stresses and pressures of their work and of their personal lives. (They often don't hear that from the Administrator.) Above all, I empathize. They, in turn, can appreciate and respect me.





## Be Your Own Best Advocate: Getting the Food You Like to Eat

A common issue raised by residents is about the food served. If you are unsatisfied with the food you receive, what can you do? Talk about what food options you would like to have during a care planning meeting. Work with the Resident Council and the Director of Food Services to talk about food options. Invite him/her to a resident council meeting to discuss concerns and ideas.

The following suggestions are being used in facilities around the country to improve residents' dining experiences:

- Create a food committee made up of residents and staff to suggest and review menus and food service options
- Swap favorite family recipes with other residents and facility staff
- Organize an event where residents write the menu and help prepare the food
- Create days to try foods from different cultures
- Vote on favorite meals to have each week
- Talk to facility staff or your local ombudsman about having flexible snack and meal times
- Ask to have a variety of drink options available – this also helps you stay hydrated
- Let a staff member know if you need extra help eating or drinking

You should be given choices about the kinds of food you eat, the times of day you eat, and how your food is served.

## Learn more about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program



The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for residents of long-term care facilities. Across the country, staff and volunteer representatives of the Ombudsman Program directly serve residents, helping them obtain quality care, quality of life, and exercise their rights.

Ombudsmen help residents by:

- Investigating complaints about care, quality of life, or any concerns raised
- Sharing information about quality care and ways to enhance quality of life
- Promoting and working with resident and family councils
- Empowering residents and promoting self-advocacy
- Helping residents and others understand residents' rights
- Support residents in exercising their rights

Each facility must post the ombudsman's contact information in a place where residents can easily see it. If you need help finding an ombudsman in your area, call 202-332-2275 or email [info@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:info@theconsumervoice.org).



For more information, visit  
[www.theconsumervoice.org](http://www.theconsumervoice.org)

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