



# THE VOICE

The e-newsletter of National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

February 5, 2019

## OMB to Review Final Nursing Home Arbitration Rule

On January 30, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced that it had received the draft final nursing home arbitration rule for review. In October 2016, CMS released revised nursing home regulations that included a ban on pre-dispute forced arbitration agreements in nursing homes. Eight months later, in June 2017, the agency issued a proposed rule that removes the ban and also deletes a provision prohibiting facilities from requiring these agreements as a condition of admission. Consumer Voice, joined by many other advocacy organizations, met with OMB staff to express opposition to the proposed rule and submitted a comment letter with over 850 signatures from individuals and over 150 signatures from national and state organizations. CMS reviewed all the comments on its proposed rule, made any revisions it felt were appropriate, and then sent the latest version of the rule to OMB.

OMB, which has up to 90 days for its review (the time can be extended), can approve the rule as is or send it back to CMS for further revision. If approved without revision, CMS can publish the rule as final.

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## New Medicare "What's Covered" App from CMS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched a new app that lets users quickly see whether Medicare covers a specific medical item or service. The "What's Covered" app can help people with original Medicare, caregivers, providers and others easily get accurate, consistent original Medicare coverage information from anywhere. The app is free and available through the Google Play and Apple App Stores. For more information, read the [press release](#) from CMS.

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## Consumer Voice Executive Director Speaks About Nursing Home Care on Connecticut Public Radio

Last Thursday, Consumer Voice Executive Director Lori Smetanka spoke on Connecticut Public Radio's Where We Live about selecting a nursing home and getting quality care. Lori emphasized being very vigilant when looking for a nursing home and doing your research before you pick a location. The segment featured other experts who discussed nursing home regulations, delivering care and staffing. Listen to the segment [here](#).

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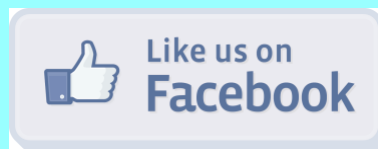
## February Issue of NORC Notes Highlights Advocating for Residents with Mental Health Needs

NORC has published the [February issue](#) of its monthly *NORC Notes*, which provides a reminder about available resources to long-term care ombudsman programs. This issue highlights resources for advocating for residents with mental health needs. In recent years Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs are serving increasing numbers of individuals with mental illness who

**Tuesday, March 12:** Traumatic Brain Injury Stakeholder Day, Hosted by ACL in Washington, DC, RSVP to [NCAPPS@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:NCAPPS@acl.hhs.gov)

**November 3-6, 2019:** Consumer Voice Annual Conference, Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, Virginia

Join the conversation and follow us on social media!



Last Week's Most Popular Post:

**Thursday, January 31:**

[Catch Consumer Voice Executive Director and other experts on CT Public Radio's "Where We Live" talking about selecting a nursing home and getting quality care.](#)



Last Week's Most Popular Tweet:

**Tuesday, January 29:**

[Medicaid Extenders Act was signed into law - will provide \\$112 million in funding for Money Follows the Person for 3 months.](#)

are living in long-term care facilities. The issues that Ombudsman programs address are often complex, and advocacy to ensure residents with mental health needs receive the care and support they need may be especially challenging. The February issue of *NORC Notes* provides resources and information about supporting residents with mental health needs for Ombudsman program advocacy and consumer education.

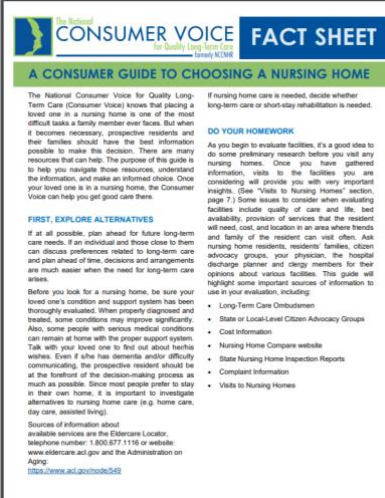
Long-term care ombudsmen care subscribe to *NORC Notes* by emailing [ombudcenter@theconsumervoices.org](mailto:ombudcenter@theconsumervoices.org).

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## Reminder: Mark Your Calendar for the Consumer Voice Conference & the Session Proposal Deadline

Save the date for the 2019 Consumer Voice Conference - November 3-6 in Arlington, Virginia. We are seeking engaging, informative proposals for conference sessions. Proposals are due March 15th. Find more information [here](#).

## Spotlight on Resources



**CONSUMER VOICE** FACT SHEET  
The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

**A CONSUMER GUIDE TO CHOOSING A NURSING HOME**

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice) knows that placing a loved one in a nursing home is one of the most difficult tasks a family member ever faces. But when it becomes necessary, prospective residents and their families should have the best information possible to make the decision. There are many resources that can help. The purpose of this guide is to help you navigate those resources, understand the information, and make an informed choice. Once your loved one is in a nursing home, the Consumer Voice can help you get good care there.

**FIRST, EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES**

If at all possible, plan ahead for future long-term care needs. If an individual and those close to them can discuss preferences related to long-term care and plan ahead of time, decisions and arrangements are much easier when the need for long-term care arises.

Before you look for a nursing home, be sure your loved one's condition and support system has been thoroughly evaluated. When properly diagnosed and treated, some conditions may improve significantly. Also, some people with serious medical conditions can remain at home with the proper support system. Talk with your loved one to find out about health wishes. Even if s/he has dementia and/or difficulty communicating, the prospective resident should be at the forefront of the decision-making process as much as possible. Since most people prefer to stay in their own home, it is important to investigate alternatives to nursing home care (e.g. home care, day care, assisted living).

Sources of information about available services are the Eldercare Locator, telephone number 1-800-677-1116 or website [www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov) and the Administration on Aging: <http://www.acl.gov/node/568>

Consumer Voice and the National Ombudsman Resource Center have a multitude of resources available online covering a wide range of long-term care topics. Visit the [Consumer Voice](#) and [NORC websites](#) to explore all the available

## Long-Term Care Resources & News

- [25 Common Nursing Home Problems and How to Resolve Them, \*Justice in Aging\*](#)

**DONATE NOW**

Read past issues of The Voice [here](#).

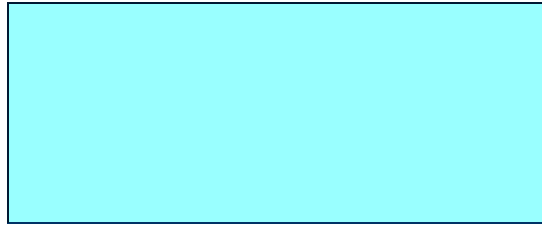
Support the Consumer Voice While You Shop Online

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resources. Check out this week's highlighted resource:

**A Consumer Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home**

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## About The Voice

The Voice is a weekly e-newsletter, published by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care. If you do not wish to continue receiving this publication, please unsubscribe below. Your contributions and comments are welcome and should be sent to [info@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:info@theconsumervoice.org). Copyright © 2019.

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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 ombudsmen to help ensure quality care for the individual. Consumer Voice's mission is to represent consumers at the national level for quality long-term care, services and supports.

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