Welcome to the Conference

We are in the midst of a major demographic change—the rapidly increasing aging population and the related intersection between aging and disability. By 2030, more than a fifth of the American population will be over age 65. People with disabilities make up approximately 13 percent of the population—and people over 65 years old make up half of those with disabilities. How we respond to these important demographic changes—and the needs of our fellow Americans—will affect the quality of life for residents and consumers of long-term services and supports for years to come and, ultimately, our own dignity as individuals and as a country. Some have responded to these demographic trends by seizing the opportunity to make a profit in long-term care. Others pander to the industry and reduce resident protections in the guise of efficiency. Yet others remain indifferent. I invite YOU to seize this opportunity to drive a social movement that prioritizes the dignity and worth of every person—one that demands quality care now. Thank you for your dedication to this cause and welcome to the 42nd Annual Consumer Voice Conference!

Iris Y. González
President, Consumer Voice Governing Board

Welcome to the Consumer Voice’s 42nd Annual Conference! For over four decades, we have been demanding and fighting for Quality NOW!, and a recognition that the rights owed to individuals receiving long-term care and services are basic human rights! One would think it is simple, but the ongoing challenges residents face obtaining quality care, experiencing quality of life, and having their rights respected in this environment where the focus is on reducing provider burden tell me that our collective advocacy needs to continue. Over the next few days, we will not only be talking about the issues facing residents and other long-term care consumers, but we will also delve into the strategies that will be necessary to move our advocacy to the next level. Take the time to meet and connect with your colleagues from across the country who are doing amazing work, share your own successes and challenges, and let’s work together to achieve our goal of Quality NOW for all consumers.

Lori Smetanka
Executive Director, Consumer Voice
Consumer Voice Leadership

2017-2018 GOVERNING BOARD
The Governing Board is responsible for traditional governance functions, including fiscal oversight and fundraising.

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2017-2018 LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
The Leadership Council is responsible for developing the organization’s policy and programmatic agendas.

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Robyn Grant, MSW – Director of Public Policy and Advocacy
Amity Overall-Laib, MA – Director of the National Ombudsman Resource Center
Carol Scott – Ombudsman Specialist
Katie Kohler – Program and Outreach Associate
Alisha Lineswala, JD – Public Policy and Program Specialist
Alejandra Ona – Finance and Operations Manager
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Maria Greene – Consultant
Sara Hunt – Consultant
Robin Low – Consultant
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The Consumer Voice sincerely thanks each of our sponsors and partners for supporting the 42nd Annual Conference & Meeting. Their support enables the Consumer Voice to keep registration fees affordable and to offer scholarships to those who would otherwise be unable to attend.

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Sunday, October 21

7:00 am – 7:00 pm  Registration Open
7:30 am – 12:00 pm  New State LTC Ombudsman Orientation (invitation only)  Roosevelt
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm  NASOP Meeting (invitation only)  Roosevelt
1:30 pm – 4:30 pm  Consumer Voice Governing Board Meeting (invitation only)  Private Dining Room
2:00 pm – 4:30 pm  Consumer Voice Leadership Council Meeting (invitation only)  Madison South
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm  NALLTCO Meeting (invitation only)  Madison North
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm  Consumer Voice Business and Membership Meeting  Madison South
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm  Welcome Reception for All Attendees  Washington
Monday, October 22

7:30 am – 8:15 am  | Breakfast On Your Own
8:00 am – 6:00 pm  | Registration Open
8:30 am – 9:00 am  | Opening Remarks & Welcome  | Presidential Ballroom
9:00 am – 10:30 am | OPENING PLENARY  | Presidential Ballroom
          Assisted Living Advocacy: If Not Now, Then When?
Advocate concerns about care and safety in assisted living have been steadily mounting. Hear directly from a GAO representative about its investigation into Medicaid assisted living that led advocates to renew their call for greater protections. Learn about recent research into promising policies and practices that can be used as models for improvement and advocacy efforts, as well as strategies at both the state and national levels. Return home with knowledge and approaches to seek stronger standards for assisted living facility residents.

PRESENTERS: Bill Lamb, Executive Director, Friends of Residents in Long-Term Care; Anne Hopewell, Senior Analyst, Government Accountability Office; Richard Mollot, Executive Director, Long Term Care Community Coalition; Erin Petegrew, Ohio Acting State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Eric Carlson, Directing Attorney, Justice in Aging

10:30 am – 11:00 am | Break
11:00 am – 12:15 pm | WORKSHOPS

Building the Right Supports: Resident Advocacy After a Crime  | Roosevelt East
When crime, exploitation, or assault occurs in long-term care, resident survivors need the right supports to drive their own advocacy, understand their rights, and attain justice in an accessible, dignified, individualized manner. However, a 2007 study showed the average advocacy response, for someone who experienced sexual violence in a facility, was none. Hear from two programs who have developed innovative methods to build advocacy, educate and involve residents, and support LTC victims of all crimes. Discover insightful victim support services, strategies to train advocates, and a resident-created video.

PRESENTERS: Andrea Kadlec, Director of Advocacy, Disability Rights Washington & Washington Office of the Developmental Disability Ombuds; Juliane Holz, Long-Term Care Victim Advocate, Center for Advocacy for the Rights & Interests of the Elderly (CARIE); Lori Walsh, Program Manager, Center for Advocacy for the Rights & Interests of the Elderly (CARIE); Vicki Elting, Washington Assistant State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

The Empowered Caregiver: Lessons from a Twenty-Year Career as a Nursing Home Neglect Attorney  | Roosevelt West
A 20-year career as a nursing home abuse and neglect attorney can teach you many valuable lessons about how to protect a loved one in a skilled nursing facility. Joe Musso has devoted his entire career to representing victims of nursing home abuse and neglect. He is the creator of the Empowered Caregiver Program which teaches family members how to confidently and effectively advocate and protect their loved one in a nursing home. If you have a loved one in a nursing home, you cannot afford to miss this presentation.

PRESENTER: Joe Musso, Esq., Partner, Ashcraft & Gerel, LLP
Monday, October 22

Building Coalition Tables: The Consumer/Labor Connection

Nationally, the consumer and labor voice tend to be absent at coalition tables. This workshop will discuss the difference that true coalition-building brings when consumers and labor advocates come together to pass progressive legislation affecting long-term care workers, accessible housing, and enhanced funding streams.

PRESENTERS: Kyndall Mason, Political & Policy Strategist, SEIU Local 503; Rachel Hansen, Long-Term Care Workforce Development Coordinator, SEIU Local 503

Ombudsman Partnerships with Legal Services: Enhancing Advocacy

This session focuses on how a regional Ombudsman program's partnership with legal services has increased resident advocacy and effectuating systemic change. Unique in the New York Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, Region 15 LTCOP has partnered with the Center for Elder Law & Justice to create the “Legal Liaison” position. This session will examine how the Legal Liaison improves and expands upon individual and systems change for residents in long-term care and how the partnership can serve as a model approach for other programs.

PRESENTERS: Lisa Newman, Director, Region 15 Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program/People Inc.; Lindsay Heckler, Staff Attorney, Center for Elder Law & Justice; Claudette Royal, New York State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm  PUBLIC POLICY & CMS UPDATE

Box Lunch provided by Consumer Voice; open to all conference attendees

Hear the latest on what’s happening in federal policy with updates on Consumer Voice’s legislative and regulatory activities.

Special Guest, David Wright, from CMS will provide an update on CMS policies and activities, including the latest updates on the nursing home regulations, enforcement policies, and other issues, including the payroll-based journal system and Nursing Home Compare.

PRESENTERS: Robyn Grant, MSW, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Consumer Voice; David Wright, Director, Quality, Safety & Oversight Group, Center for Clinical Standards and Quality, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

1:45 pm – 3:00 pm  WORKSHOPS

The Overlooked Party: Helping Families Become Positive Partners

How can family councils and Ombudsmen work together with facilities in assuring that family members are not overlooked? Join us as we discuss this question and much more from the perspectives of an Ombudsman and lessons learned from an engaged daughter. Learn practical strategies to help families become positive partners with the nursing home staff. Receive the latest updates on resources and the Consumer Voice Family Council Project. Please bring your experience to the discussion!

PRESENTERS: Rita Morris, Daughter, Family Member; Joani Latimer, Virginia State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Alisha Lineswala, JD, Public Policy and Program Specialist, Consumer Voice
Monday, October 22

So Sue Me Then: Consumer Rights and Nursing Home Arbitration Clauses  
Roosevelt West

Under the Obama Administration, CMS pushed back against the practice of nursing homes forcing residents to sign away their right to a jury trial and sign arbitration agreements. Under the new administration, CMS is now reversing its position. Learn what rights residents have to redress abuse and neglect, and how arbitration clauses can affect these rights.

PRESENTERS: Rob Schenk, Attorney, Schenk Smith LLC; Will Smith, Attorney, Schenk Smith LLC

I’m Coming Out! In Support of Quality Living for LGBT Residents  
Madison North

Older adults across the nation are joining Diana Ross singing, “I’m Coming Out’ – as an LGBT resident in my skilled living community.” During this session, new and seasoned staff and volunteers will explore challenges faced by LGBT residents and discuss strategies to support their personal directions for quality living. Through discussion and case studies, attendees will explore ways to support LGBT residents’ personal directions related to name and pronoun usage, visitation, health and personal care needs, clothing choices, and cultural celebrations.

PRESENTERS: Sherrill Wayland, Manager, SAGE; Joseph Rodrigues, California State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Challenges and Innovations in Systems Advocacy by the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program  
Kennedy

The Older Americans Act charges the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) with advocating for systemic change on behalf of long-term care facility residents. Based on data from the National Evaluation of the LTCOP, this session describes the types of systems advocacy activities that programs undertake, the relationships involved, and their challenges. To illustrate this work, the Georgia LTCOP will share effective strategies that their programs have used to promote residents’ quality of life and care.

PRESENTERS: Kim Nguyen, Principal Research Scientist, NORC at the University of Chicago; Emily White, Principal Research Analyst, NORC at the University of Chicago; Melanie McNeil, Georgia State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Louise Ryan, Ombudsman Specialist, Administration on Aging/Administration for Community Living

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm  Break

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm  PLENARY  Presidential Ballroom

Not Her Own Person Anymore – Strategies for Avoiding and Addressing the Potentially Devastating Impact of Guardianship

No policy, setting, or circumstance is more disempowering than when a guardian is appointed in a plenary role. This panel discussion will focus on avoiding unnecessary guardianship, responding to inappropriate or abusive guardians, and understanding the concept of capacity from a medical and legal perspective. Edith + Eddie, an Academy-Award nominated short documentary that powerfully illustrates the loss of autonomy and devastating impact of guardianships, will be shown and discussed.

PRESENTERS: George Taler, MD, Director, Long-Term Care MedStar Washington Hospital Center; Alison E. Hirschel, JD, Managing Attorney, Michigan Elder Justice Initiative; MT Connolly, Elder Justice Consultant

SPECIAL GUEST: Rebecca M. Wright, Edith’s daughter

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm  AWARDS CEREMONY & RECEPTION  Presidential Ballroom

See award winners on page 16
Tuesday, October 23

7:30 am – 8:15 am  Breakfast On Your Own
8:00 am – 5:30 pm  Registration Open
8:30 am – 10:00 am  PLENARY  Presidential Ballroom
Successfully Challenging Facility Initiated Transfers and Discharges

Nursing home transfers and discharges are an enormous problem nationwide. For the last six years, issues regarding discharges have been the most common complaint received by Ombudsman programs. Presenters will discuss current federal protections, the CMS initiative to address facility-initiated discharges, and advocacy strategies to reduce discharges. Additionally, advocacy by the Maryland Ombudsman program and litigation by the State Attorney General against a state chain regarding facility-initiated discharges will be discussed.

PRESENTERS: Toby Edelman, Senior Policy Attorney, Center for Medicare Advocacy; Stevanne Ellis, Maryland State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Josh Auerbach, Special Assistant & Senior Litigation Counsel, Executive Division, Office of the Maryland Attorney General

10:00 am – 10:30 am  Break
10:30 am – 11:45 am  WORKSHOPS

“Why Don’t They Ever Apologize?” Ombudsman Practice Tips for Facilitating Productive Meetings between Consumers and Facility Representatives  Roosevelt East

As we address abuse and neglect, families often relate that they tried to advocate for the resident with facility representatives and were repeatedly stone-walled. Some cases involved an Ombudsman; some not. This session, for ombudsmen and interested others, addresses how to facilitate respectful meetings and care conferences with facility representatives and family members, maintaining a focus on the resident. This facilitation is critical to early intervention and effective correction.

PRESENTERS: Iris C. Freeman, Founding Chair, Minnesota Elder Justice Center; Cheryl Hennen, Minnesota State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Marit Anne Peterson, Program Director, Minnesota Elder Justice Center

How to Define Quality Using Resident Voices: Empowered Residents, Real Progress, and Remaining Challenges  Roosevelt West

Since 2002, Pennsylvania has implemented a program to educate residents and provide them with self-advocacy skills in long-term care settings across the care spectrum. This session will focus on how we have connected residents’ voices outside the walls of their facilities. The session will also address challenges that exist for residents and ombudsmen. Participants will take away strategies to make their Ombudsman Program resident-focused and driven.

PRESENTERS: Kimberly Shetler, Regional Ombudsman Specialist, Pennsylvania Department of Aging State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program; Becky Fortenbaugh, Program Manager, Pennsylvania Department of Aging State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
Tuesday, October 23

**Death of 105 Elders Due to Resident-to-Resident Incidents: A Pilot Study**

Madison North

Based on an extensive review of over 150 newspaper articles and dozens of death review reports, the study identified 105 deaths of elders as a result of resident-to-resident incidents in dementia in long-term care homes. The first study in North America on these fatal incidents consisted of an in-depth examination of the circumstances surrounding these episodes. Patterns identified could inform long-term care homes’ efforts to prevent injuries and tragic deaths in similar situations.

PRESENTER: Eilon Caspi, Gerontologist & Research Associate, School of Nursing-University of Minnesota

**Protecting Resident Rights through Discharge Notice Collection and Review**

Kennedy

Now that CMS Requirements of Participation require facilities to send notices of involuntary discharges to Ombudsman programs, programs have an important opportunity to identify trends and other systemic advocacy opportunities. However, they also have the responsibility of receiving and tracking these notices. The Office of the DC Long-Term Care Ombudsman has been receiving these notices for close to 20 years and will provide an overview of their process and outcomes of receiving and reviewing notices. While the DC office is small compared to other offices, the information they plan to share will be very beneficial for local programs embarking on this new notice journey.

PRESENTERS: Mary Ann Parker, Staff Attorney, Office of the DC Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program; Anthony Kahaly, Nursing Home Ombudsman, Office of the DC Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program; Mark Miller, DC State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

11:45 am – 12:00 pm **Break**

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm **Resident Empowerment Luncheon**

Presidential Ballroom

Open to all conference participants

**The Administration for Community Living: Priorities and Updates**

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: Whitney Bailey, Ph.D., Deputy Administrator for Regional Operations and Partnership Development, Administration for Community Living

**Speak Up: Know Your Rights and How to Use Them**

Knowing and understanding resident rights is the basis for strong, effective advocacy. During our program, we will hear from and about residents who are actively engaged in advocating at the individual, facility, state and national levels and obtain tips and strategies for individuals to feel confident in speaking up about what is important to them.

PROGRAM SPEAKERS: Penelope Shaw, PhD, Advocate; Robyn Grant, MSW, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Consumer Voice; Kimberly Shetler, Regional Ombudsman Specialist, Pennsylvania Department of Aging State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program; Mairead Painter, Connecticut State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Tuesday, October 23

2:00 pm – 2:30 pm  Break

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm  Plenary  
Quality NOW – Advocating for Better Care Without Drugs  

We’ve been talking for years – decades even – about the dangers of antipsychotic medications for individuals with dementia. During this plenary, hear about some of the important advocacy currently underway around this issue, and discuss what more can be done at the state and federal level to make a significant difference in reducing the use of these dangerous medications.

PRESENTERS: Kelly Bagby, Vice President for Litigation on Health, Housing, Hunger and Human Services, AARP Foundation Litigation; Bethany Brown, Researcher, Older People’s Rights, Health & Human Rights Division, Human Rights Watch; Ilene Henshaw, Director, Health & Family Team, State Advocacy & Strategy Integration, AARP; Jonathan Evans, MD, Medical Director, Geriatrician; Lori Smetanka, JD, Executive Director, Consumer Voice

4:00 pm – 4:15 pm  Break

4:15 pm – 5:30 pm  WORKSHOPS

Advocating for Well-Being Using Non-Pharmacological Approaches  
Roosevelt East

Uncover how a non-pharmacological approach can address the seven levels of well-being by enhancing quality of life and treatment outcomes; increasing communication and social engagement; restoring identity and personhood; reducing agitation and behaviors associated with Alzheimer’s related Sundowning; eliminating medications; enhancing safe aging in place; offsetting boredom, isolation, pain and depression; stimulating participation in therapies; transforming organizations; improving caring efficiency and morale; meeting new standards and guidelines for quality care; enhancing family/spouse/intergenerational experiences; and more.

PRESENTERS: Robin Lombardo, Northeast Regional Director, Music & Memory; Michelle Daniel, Vice President of Philanthropy and Strategic Implementation, Methodist Senior Services

Using Systems Advocacy to Improve the Ombudsman Program  
Roosevelt West

What would your Ombudsman program do with adequate funding? What laws does your program need to be effective and protect facility residents? This session will provide Ombudsman program representatives and Ombudsman supporters with ideas and information they can take back to their states to use systemic advocacy to improve Ombudsman programs. The session will review how to create or strengthen a local state Ombudsman association including costs, advantages, and risks.

PRESENTERS: Karen Jones, Co-Chair, NALLTCO; Cindy Englert, Co-Chair, NALLTCO; Louise Ryan, Ombudsman Specialist, Administration on Aging/Administration for Community Living
Supported Decision-Making: A Listening Session  Madison North

The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making ("SDM") advances SDM through research, training, and promotion of best practices. SDM assists older adults and people with disabilities to receive the help they want and need to make their own decisions. We will share the major advances in the use of SDM and gather feedback on what progress is needed. This session is an opportunity to assess the challenges and opportunities for using SDM in your work.

PRESENTERS: Morgan K. Whitlatch, Lead Project Director, National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making; Tina M. Campanella, Chief Executive Officer, Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities

Advocating for Older Adults Who Have Experienced Trauma  Kennedy

Trauma and aging affect the brain in particular ways, and ombudsmen and other advocates may face unique challenges in assisting such clients. Briefly, we will discuss the neurobiology of trauma, and issues that may affect older adults’ cognitive functioning (effects of aging on the brain, dementia, etc.). Given this research, we will provide an overview of practices that delineate how to best advocate for older adults who have experienced trauma.

PRESENTERS: Laura Cook, Director, Financial Crime Resource Center, The National Center for Victims of Crime; Keeley Frank, Senior Services Specialist, VictimConnect Resource Center, The National Center for Victims of Crime
Bringing Hand in Hand to Life – A Competency Based Resource for Dementia and Abuse Training  
Kennedy

Ombudsmen are often called on to provide abuse prevention and other training to nursing home staff. Hand in Hand is a tremendous resource for staff education on abuse recognition and prevention, and on understanding dementia. CMS funded its development and in 2013 mailed a copy to every nursing home in the country. Unfortunately, because of its size and complexity, it can be intimidating for nursing home staff developers and is often left sitting on the shelf, or worse yet, presented to staff in a dry manner. The new Requirements for Participation require that nursing home staff have a basic understanding of dementia and the competencies needed to relate well and provide good care to their residents with dementia. This highly interactive session will provide advocates an in-depth familiarity with the Hand in Hand training program and tools for bringing it to life through engaging adult learning principles.

Presenters: Charla Long, JD, President, Go Long Consulting; Cathie Brady, Consultant, B&F Consulting

Understanding and Addressing Bullying and Other Antagonistic Behaviors Among Older Adults  
Madison

This presentation introduces participants to bullying and other antagonistic behaviors among older adults. The following will be reviewed: the definition of bullying, the range of incidents that commonly occur, the characteristics of older individuals who bully their peers and the characteristics of older individuals who are the targets of peer bullying, and the impact bullying has on older adults. Emphasis will be given to a multi-level intervention framework for addressing bullying in senior housing and senior service settings and specific interventions that providers have found promising to minimize such behaviors. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss in small groups the specific difficulties they are having in their own organizations and receive feedback from the presenter and one another.

Presenter: Robin P. Bonifas, PhD, MSW, LICSW, Associate Professor, Associate Director for Curriculum & Instruction Honors Faculty, John A. Hartford Faculty Scholar in Geriatric Social Work, School of Social Work, College of Public Service & Community Solutions, Arizona State University

Nursing Home Evictions to Inappropriate Settings: Finding Answers  
Jefferson

Nursing home “patient dumping” to hospitals, homeless shelters, and other inappropriate settings can be catastrophic for the resident and his/her family. This interactive session will explore strategies for preventing and responding to these illegal acts, identify tools and best practices, and explore how to equip advocates, residents, and families. We will discuss some high and low-profile examples of dumping, as well as examine how various states are doing in holding non-compliant facilities accountable.

Presenters: Kelly Bagby, Vice President for Litigation on Health, Housing, Hunger and Human Services, AARP Foundation Litigation; Alison Hirschel, Managing Attorney, Michigan Elder Justice Initiative, Elder Law Attorney, Michigan Poverty Law Program; Matthew Borden, Esq., Braun, Hagey & Borden; Karrie Jordan, Michigan Assistant State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Lori Smetanka, JD, Executive Director, Consumer Voice.
JANET TULLOCH MEMORIAL ADVOCACY AWARD: Kristine Sundberg

This award was established in 2000 after the death of Janet Tulloch, a nursing home resident, author, committed advocate and long-time member of the Consumer Voice’s Board of Directors. It honors a citizen advocate, family caregiver, or long-term care consumer (e.g. resident of a nursing home or assisted living facility or an individual receiving home and community-based services) who has worked directly with and for residents to improve the lives of long-term care consumers.

Kristine Sundberg is the first president of Elder Voice Family Advocates (EVFA), a Minnesota-based citizen advocacy group. Kris’s tragic experience with her father spurred her to join EVFA. She utilized her unique skill set as a former executive and corporate officer in Fortune 100 and entrepreneurial companies to mobilize and grow EVFA’s membership and effectively advocate for Minnesota’s vulnerable long-term care consumers.

In her time with EVFA, Kris has testified multiple times at Minnesota Senate and House hearings to support funding for elder abuse investigations and for stronger legislation protecting Minnesota’s long-term care residents. She also served on the Elder Abuse Working Group appointed by Governor Dayton that resulted in a report containing numerous recommendations related to the rights, care and protection of older and vulnerable adults. The report served as a template for several bills introduced by both Democrats and Republicans during the 2018 legislative session. In her day-to-day, Kris utilizes the advocacy workbook she has developed and trains EVFA members. She also remains as a source of vital information for family members, helping them to tell their personal stories of abuse and neglect to the media and before legislative committees.

EVFA has grown to over 130 members and has developed a reputation as THE voice of those who care for residents in Minnesota’s long-term care facilities.

In addition to her strong advocacy work, Kristine is the owner of The Links Group, a public affairs, marketing communications, and public relations consulting firm, and has received several awards for professional excellence. She is also very active in public service.

HOWARD HINDS MEMORIAL AWARD: Rachel Tate

The Howard Hinds Award was established in 2005 in memory of the late Howard Hinds, a Tennessee District Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Howard was a true champion for residents and for the Ombudsman program as well as a passionate advocate on national issues. The award honors an individual who has effectively advocated for long-term consumers on the local level.

Rachel Tate began her social work career working in the skid row area of Los Angeles. She worked with veterans and others to provide successful post incarceration reentry support to reduce recidivism and prevent homelessness. Rachel has also provided HIV education and risk reduction counseling to moderate-to-high risk clients.
Leadership Awards

Rachel has been a Long-Term Care Ombudsman for eleven years. As a Regional Director, she oversees one of five regional offices of the WISE & Healthy Aging LTC Ombudsman Program and is the sole contractor of Ombudsman services for the City and County of Los Angeles. She works with a number of multidisciplinary teams to address concerns related to individuals residing in long-term care. She is passionate about improving quality of life and quality of care for facility residents and has worked to make it a community effort by collaborating with city officials, law enforcement, and fire departments.

Rachel has a Masters in Social Work from California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) where she was a recipient of the Hartford Foundation Gerontology Intensive Fellowship Training Program. While at CSUB, she became an advocate for appropriate end of life services for correctional inmates. She also participated in a Hartford Foundation Change AGEnts Policy Institute. In 2017, she received the Heart of Social Work Award from USC.

CERNORIA JOHNSON MEMORIAL ADVOCACY AWARD: Heather Bruemmer

Cernoria McGowan Johnson (1909-1990) set up the national program of Nursing Home Ombudsmen in 1974. The award is presented in her honor to someone whose work has had national impact or is a model for national excellence and exemplifies accomplishment in his or her chosen field.

Heather Bruemmer began her journey with the Wisconsin Ombudsman Program in 2000, serving first as a Regional Ombudsman and later as Ombudsman Program Supervisor. In 2008, Heather was selected to lead the Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long-Term Care as Executive Director and Wisconsin State Ombudsman. In these roles, Heather acts as the primary advocate for consumers of long-term care services in the state of Wisconsin. In addition to managing the agency’s overall operations, she is the Board’s direct liaison to the Governor and members of the Wisconsin State Legislature.

In the last year, Heather was appointed by Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel to serve on the state’s Task Force on Elder Abuse and by Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary Linda Seemeyer to serve on the Department’s Dementia Steering Committee. In addition, Heather actively serves on many statewide committees such as the Wisconsin Coalition for Collaborative Excellence in Assisted Living, the WisCaregiver Careers Task Force, the Statewide Falls Prevention Advisory Council, the Civil Money Penalty State Review Committee and as the Aging Liaison for the Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities. In 2008, Heather was appointed Chair of the state’s Long-Term Care Advisory Council by the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and has subsequently been reappointed in this capacity by each individual to serve as Secretary since that time.

Heather is an active member of the National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs and served as the treasurer for over five years. Heather is a passionate advocate for consumers and is honored to be the State Ombudsman for Wisconsin! (Go Badgers! Go Packers!) She is very fortunate to have an amazing staff and a tremendous Board of Directors who are equally dedicated to the consumers we serve.
Leadership Awards

**JANET WELLS PUBLIC POLICY LEADERSHIP AWARD: Senator Richard Blumenthal**

The Consumer Voice’s Public Policy Leadership Award recognizes an individual who has provided exemplary leadership in the public policy field in advancing quality of care and quality of life for residents receiving long-term care services.

Originally sworn in on January 5, 2011, Richard Blumenthal is serving his second term as a United States Senator from the State of Connecticut. Senator Blumenthal served an unprecedented five terms as Connecticut’s Attorney General, fighting for people against large and powerful special interests. His aggressive law enforcement for consumer protection, environmental stewardship, labor rights, and personal privacy has helped reshape the role of state attorneys general nationwide and resulted in the recovery of hundreds of millions of dollars for Connecticut taxpayers and consumers each year.

Senator Richard Blumenthal has been a champion of robust protections for nursing home residents and has consistently tackled vital issues affecting long-term care consumers across the country. He has taken a strong stance against the misuse of antipsychotic medications, rightfully calling it elder abuse and has actively opposed forced pre-dispute arbitration in nursing homes. In 2016, he convened a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in Connecticut to highlight financial exploitation and invited former Connecticut State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Nancy Shaffer to testify about the financial exploitation of long-term care consumers. Most recently, Senator Blumenthal has been actively engaged in advocating with CMS on behalf of nursing home residents. Earlier this year, he, along with Senator Klobuchar, spearheaded the writing of a letter signed by twelve Senators to CMS Administrator Verma urging her to reverse the agency’s guidance on the appropriate use of civil monetary penalties and implement the 2016 federal nursing home rule without delay. Most recently, he and Congresswoman Schakowsky wrote Administrator Verma urging CMS to do all that it can to ensure that staffing data and the rating each nursing home receives through the Five-Star Quality Rating system are accurate, standard, and easy to understand.

**TOBY S. EDELMAN LEGAL JUSTICE AWARD: Attorney General Brian Frosh**

This award was created in 2009 to honor those who, working through or with the legal system, go to extraordinary lengths to achieve justice for long-term care consumers. It is named in honor of Toby Edelman of the Center for Medicare Advocacy, whose work for more than 30 years has influenced and shaped long-term care law, policy, and enforcement.

Brian Frosh is working to ensure fairness, equality, and justice for all Marylanders as the state’s 46th Attorney General. Serving as the people’s lawyer, Brian is focused on safeguarding vulnerable populations, including nursing home residents and people with disabilities by investigating and prosecuting wrongdoing at all levels.

Brian’s work to protect long-term care consumers has made a significant impact in Maryland and beyond. His suit against a local nursing home chain, Neiswanger Management Services, LLC (NMS), for “unlawfully and unsafely evict[ing] dozens of frail and disabled residents to homeless shelters and unlicensed assisted living facilities” and committing multiple counts of Medicaid fraud has prevented facilities from resident dumping and drawn awareness to this violation of rights that nursing home residents across the country face daily. Furthermore, Brian took a strong stance and advocated for nursing home residents across the country in the recent Attorney Generals letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Administrator Verma condemning the roll back and delay in implementation of vital regulations and protections.
Leadership Awards

**PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD: Human Rights Watch**

*The Consumer Voice Public Service Award recognizes an individual or organization whose work has profoundly expanded coverage and public understanding of long-term care issues.*

Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. It scrupulously investigates abuses, exposes the facts widely, and pressures those with power to respect rights and secure justice. Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that works as part of a vibrant movement to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all, including nursing home residents.

Human Rights Watch’s report, “They Want Docile: How Nursing Homes in the United States Overmedicate People with Dementia,” sparked a necessary dialogue in America about how we treat our nursing home residents. Before that report, many Americans were unaware of the conditions in nursing homes, let alone the reality that overmedication is rampant and may happen to loved ones in nursing homes. The report is unmatched in how many people it has reached across the world and for shedding light on an issue that is prevalent in too many nursing homes.

**ELMA HOLDER FOUNDER’S AWARD: Sara Hunt**

*Established in 2002 as a lifetime achievement award to honor a person whose life work exemplifies leadership in the field of long-term care reform, the award is also a tribute to Elma Holder, the Consumer Voice’s founder and friend. Elma’s personal commitment, integrity and vision shaped the organization and quality of care and life in long-term care.*

Sara’s work with the aging network began in 1977 when she served as the Assistant Director of the School of Social Work’s Office on Aging at Louisiana State University. In 1981, she started providing training and back-up support for local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs and then became the Louisiana State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. After five years in that role, Sara became a consultant with NCCNHR. She has provided technical assistance to Ombudsmen, developed and conducted training programs, and created materials for LTCOP guidance and training. Sara has worked with the National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center since the Administration on Aging awarded the first contract for a center. She served as a consultant to the National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs for 26 years, and also worked on a number of special projects, including conducting assessments of Ombudsman programs with Carroll Estes and Bill Benson in a number of states.

Sara has been an integral part of Consumer Voice and NORC for decades. Her work has informed the advocacy and enhanced the effectiveness of Ombudsman programs nationwide. She has authored many works that are instrumental in Ombudsman program training such as, the *Basic Complaint Handling Skills for Ombudsmen*, *Working Through Ethical Dilemmas, Conflict of Interest and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program*, and the NORC Curriculum that many Ombudsman programs use for their initial certification training. Most importantly, she co-authored the critically important advocacy tool for residents and families, *Nursing Homes: Getting Good Care There*.

Her dedication to improving the quality of life and care of individuals living in long-term care facilities by supporting effective and successful Ombudsman program advocacy is unparalleled. Ombudsman programs and other advocates have relied and benefitted from Sara’s in-depth knowledge, experience, and sage advice for many years.
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