Ombudsman Advocacy in Assisted Living/Board and Care: Past, Present, and Future

DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
We make life better!
Quarterly Visits vs. Monthly Visits:
- In Colorado LLTCO are mandated to visit ALFs/Board and Care Homes quarterly.
  - Visit as needed and for complaints.
  - Often visiting multiple times per quarter.
- ALF/Board & Care Homes carry the same license in Colorado.

Why have an ALF Specialist Team & SNF Specialist Team?
- Growth
  - Over 300 ALFs in the Denver metro area.
- Lack of regulations
- Moving away from complaint only visits vs. compliance visits.
  - Historically visits were only done when a complaint was filed.
- Having a different advocacy approach.
  - Advocating in a Board and Care Home is very different than a large ALF or even a SNF.
How can we be effective ALF Advocates?

- **Receive Training**
  - NORC
  - State Ombudsman – Shelley Hitt
  - Special populations: MI, BI, DD, Alzheimer’s/Dementia, & LGBT.

- **Provide Resources**
  - Posters
  - Residents’ Rights bookmarks
  - Business cards

- **Partnerships with outside agencies**
  - Health Dept Surveyors
  - SEP
  - APS
  - PACE Program
  - Mental Health Centers

- **Build Relationships**
  - Residents
  - Family members
  - Administrators
  - Staff

- **Provide Information and Referral**
  - Residents
  - Families
  - Outside Agencies
How can we be effective ALF Advocates?

- Encourage the ALF to “do the right thing”.
- **Share Information & Resources**
  - LLTCO within your organization or around your state.
  - LLTCO around the country.
- **Be Creative**
  - The art of bluffing
  - Doubling up or team visits
  - Thinking outside the regulations
  - Using the ALF/B&C own policies, procedures, & admission agreement as an advocacy tool.
- **Be Persistent**
  - Repeat visits
  - Being visible
  - Attending resident council meetings and/or Family Council meetings.
- **Provide Training**
  - Providing training to ALF staff.
    - Residents’ Rights; Dealing with difficult behaviors; and Sexuality
  - Providing training to residents on their rights.
  - Consultation to Administrators and/or staff
  - 30 hour training provided to Admin/Owners
  - Project Visibility to staff & outside agencies
Barriers to Being an Effective ALF/B&C Advocate:

- Very few regulations
- Inadequately Trained Owners/Operators
- Lack of Professionalism
- Uncooperative – not willing to problem solve.
- No accountability
- Lack of consistency
  - B&C vs. ALF
- **Staffing**
  - Training
  - Not enough to meet residents’ needs.
  - High turnover
  - Language barrier
How do we track systemic issues?

- Attend the Assisted Living Residences Advisory at the Health Dept.
- We created a workgroup between the ALR team, HCPF, & Health Dept.
- We attend monthly Adult Protection Review Team Meetings.
- Initiated a proposed licensure of Assisted Living Facility Administrators/Operators through the Sunrise Application process at DORA.
- Legislative participation
- Sit on local BHO Stakeholders Council
- Work with local LBGT organization - SAGE
Trends:

- Higher level of care
  - Lack of regulations & oversight.
- Growth
- Spend down requirements
- Younger mentally ill population.
  - Lack of housing options
  - Lack of resources
- **Increase in Residents’ Rights violations**
  - Dignity/respect
  - Verbal abuse
  - B & C homes blur the lines/ boundaries.
- Discharge Notices
Questions???

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