

CARE Matters
Choice-Accountability-Rights-Empowerment

2006 Residents' Rights Week

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National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform

Choice of long-term care setting and day to day decisions
Accountability of facilities and regulators to residents
Rights respected and care directed by residents
Empowered residents, families, advocates and staff

CARE Matters in all long-term care settings - nursing homes, assisted living, board and care facilities and in care being provided in the community.

CARE Matters to every resident, caregiver, family members and staff person who are committed to quality of care and quality of life.

CARE Matters to advocates, researchers and others who seek a long-term care system that is focused on individualized care, respect and relationships.

This year's Residents' Rights packet provides concrete activities and resources that focus us on key dimensions of **CARE – Choice, Accountability, Rights, and Empowerment**. It challenges us to talk with each other about what CARE means, and in doing so we learn that there are common denominators to CARE – a kind spirit, adequate numbers of well trained staff who can respond to needs, a safe living environment and interactions that are filled with respect. Simultaneously, we learn that there are very individualized interpretations of what CARE means. For me CARE means not being alone when I am very sick. For some CARE means honoring their right to be alone for periods of time because that is a key part of their personality and therefore a part of individualized care.

We hope that you will use the ideas in this packet throughout the year and particularly during Residents' Rights Week, October 1-7, 2006. At NCCNHR, an Essay/Poetry Challenge about the meaning of CARE was held in the summer and a compilation of the entries will be made available in September. We encourage you to have your own challenge as an opportunity to understand better what CARE means. Please share your creativity with us!

NCCNHR's 2006 Annual Conference, October 22-24, will also focus on the CARE Matters theme so that caring persons from across the country can join together to discuss how we can better promote Choice, Accountability, Rights and Empowerment. We hope that you will consider joining us.

Another opportunity for caring and for promoting CARE is by participating in the newly established two year campaign – Advancing Quality in America's Nursing Homes. Beginning with a Summit September 29, 2006, this campaign seeks to address eight important dimensions of nursing home care including restraints, pressure sores, pain, staff turnover, and consistent assignment. The Campaign is a coalition of providers, organizations, and consumers who have made a commitment to bring individual and national attention to these topic areas. To learn more, visit the NCCNHR website and click on Campaign – www.nccnrh.org

While we express our caring in different ways, our commitment will result in a better and more caring long-term care system. Some of us provide daily care for residents, along with a caring spirit that results in respectful and enjoyable relationships. Some of us show care in our visits to our loved ones and our heartfelt commitment to working with them to obtain the best care possible. Others express their caring in advocacy on the local, state and national level – working hard so that the most vulnerable in our society are treated as unique individuals with dignity, courtesy and honor.

Thank you to each one of you who cares!

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Matters

A HISTORY OF CELEBRATING RESIDENTS' RIGHTS WEEK

One way to honor residents receiving long-term care is by celebrating Residents' Rights Week, the first full week of October (October 1-7, 2006). This is an opportunity to show tribute to residents and support ombudsmen, citizen advocates, facility staff and family members who work to promote and support residents' rights. Setting aside a week to focus on rights is an effective way to make sure that this important topic is never forgotten in your community, facility or state.

Residents' Rights Week is designated by the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR) each year to highlight residents living in all long-term care settings. It is a time to reflect on the importance of the Nursing Home Reform Law of 1987 that promises quality of life and care and rights for each resident. During this week NCCNHR also gives special recognition to the work of thousands of individuals who collaborate daily to help assure that dignity, privacy and other basic human rights - often taken for granted in the community - are maintained as an integral part of the lives of residents living in long-term care settings.

Residents' Rights Week originated in 1981 at an annual meeting of the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform. Several nursing home residents in attendance from across the United States decided that it would be special for all residents if time were set aside to celebrate residents and their rights, separate from annual National Nursing Home Week events always held in May. NCCNHR organized a successful petition drive to persuade Congress to designate a "Residents' Rights Day." Senator Claude Pepper (D-FL) and Senator David Pryor (D-AR) responded by introducing a Congressional Resolution for that purpose.

NCCNHR was also successful in making arrangements to take five nursing home residents to the White House to meet with President Jimmy Carter's Special Counselor on Aging, Dr. Harold Sheppard. The residents who attended were Janet Tulloch, Rae Spanover, Joan Knowlton, Ethel Gross and Virginia Caming (all now deceased).

Since 1980, NCCNHR has preserved this tradition of celebrating Residents' Rights, although we have extended the designation to a full week so that facility staff, family members, community advocates and ombudsmen will have flexible opportunities to conduct educational programs and festive events.

Thank you for working to make Residents' Rights Week special and meaningful for all involved. Please remember to share information about your successes so that we can include them in next year's packet. Every resident appreciates each step you take to help promote and maintain dignity and humanity in long-term care services. If you have questions, please call us at (202) 332-2275.

DEDICATION

This 2006 Residents' Rights Week packet is dedicated to *Dossie Holder*, the beloved mother of NCCNHR Founder, Elma Holder. Dossie was a strong supporter of NCCNHR's work and mission, and would often be found at NCCNHR Events, including annual conferences and rallies. She was a very spirited woman who had a great love of life. Dossie Holder knew that CARE Matters for individuals needing long-term care services. Thus we honor her memory and spirit by dedicating this packet to her.



Dossie Holder
1917 - 2006

Lessons learned from Dossie:

- ❖ Don't be afraid to express your desires – especially the older you get
- ❖ Be as kind as you can, to everyone you see
- ❖ Let the President know when you are angry
- ❖ Don't blame the past. Learn from it. Get on with it.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESIDENTS' RIGHTS WEEK PACKET

The National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform creates a packet each year to help facilities and advocates plan events for residents, and educate others about residents' rights.

The packet is divided into many sections. Here is a brief overview of what you can find:

Introduction and Overview - A letter from the NCCNHR Executive Director and dedication of this year's book. Also included in this section are order forms to purchase items to help celebrate Residents' Rights week and previous years' packets.

CARE Sections - We have dedicated one section toward each word in our theme: choice, accountability, rights, and empowerment. In each of these sections you will find related information and fact sheets, training materials, and stories of CARE from across the United States.

Activity Ideas - This section includes various activity ideas for facilities to use in planning events to celebrate the week.

Promotional Materials - This section includes sample press releases, letters to the editors, posters, and more to make it easier than ever to recognize residents' rights.

Resources - This section is full of resources that may be useful including things referenced in the entire packet, as well as some additional resources of interest.

Acknowledgments

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