Dear Administrator,

Residents’ Rights Month is an annual event held in October by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities, including nursing homes, sub acute units, assisted living, board and care and retirement communities. It is a time for celebration and recognition offering an opportunity for every facility to highlight the dignity, respect and value of each individual resident. The theme for Residents' Rights Month 2012 is, "My Voice, My Vote, My Right" with the goal of encouraging residents' right to vote and participation in the political process.

Long-Term Care residents can encounter challenges when it comes to voting, which limit their ability to participate in elections. Registration processes, lack of access, and questions about cognitive status are just a few. It is important that residents, family members and staff understand residents’ voting rights and work to protect and encourage that right. The Ombudsman program is available to support facilities in their 2012 Resident Rights celebrations. Please contact your Ombudsman Regional Coordinator for assistance, and refer to: www.theconsumervoice.org/resident/nursinghome/residents-rights#Residents-Rights-Month for a list of resources and activity ideas. Additionally, local League of Women Voter’s chapters are available to provide information, assistance, and guidance with registration, early voting, and accessing absentee ballots, for residents interested in voting this year.

Across the country, residents of long-term care facilities along with family members, ombudsmen, citizen advocates, facility staff and others will hold festivities and educational events to honor long-term residents and their unique contributions to society. We look forward to working with you this October, to celebrate New Mexico’s valued citizens in long-term care communities.

Sincerely,

Sondra Everhart
State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Aging and Long-Term Services Department
2550 Cerrillos Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-476-4790