

Activity Suggestion: Residents' Rights Rally

Participants: Residents, families, ombudsmen, advocates, representatives from state and federal legislatures, providers of services, and any other interested parties

Supplies:

- Location to hold event (senior center, VFW hall, town hall, recreation center or other public location)
- Flyers or posters to get the word out about the event
- Invitations to speakers
- Microphone and/or speaker podium (depending on size of event)

Purpose: A great way to officially kick-off or end Residents' Rights Month activities. This activity is a public way to promote, confirm, and renew commitment to residents' rights. The rally can be used to raise the level of awareness in relation to the challenges faced by individuals in the long-term care environment. Also, a good opportunity to invite local dignitaries and others to be involved in Residents' Rights Month activities.

Description: The residents' rights rally is an opportunity to educate all about long-term care residents' rights and to involve the resident voice & perspective on defining quality care practices. Resident and family councils should be involved in the organization and planning for the rally by serving as speakers & suggesting which guest speakers to invite. Public officials (see attached list for suggested invites) may use this opportunity to speak in support of residents' rights and hear from residents about their experiences of long-term care. A mayoral or governor proclamation of Residents' Rights Month should be utilized in the ceremonies for this day. See attached sample agenda for other ideas.

Additions or Modifications:

- Hold a smaller scale version of a Residents' Rights Rally in your nursing home or assisted living's activity room or other communal gathering place - invite the Ombudsman to provide a presentation
- Have a special Residents' Rights Month meeting – involve resident or family councils and encourage all residents & family members to attend
- Extend invitations to residents, family members, city and state officials (anyone who may have a vested interest in Residents' Rights) to serve as platform guests at the rally.
- Showcase Resident Council and/or Family Council successes at the rally
- Showcase resident artwork, writing, photos, etc. at the rally

Sample Invitation List

Be sure to have a planning committee for the event. Include residents, family members, citizen advocates, activity professionals, and other facility staff in the planning process.

Below is a list of key people to invite to your Residents' Rights Rally:

- Residents from local long-term care facilities
- Resident family members
- Staff from local long-term care facilities
- State and/or local Ombudsman
- Representative from Citizen Advocacy Group
- Representative from the State Unit on Aging or local Area Agency on Aging
- Elected representatives/legislators and other public officials (i.e. Attorney General, Governor, Mayor, City Council Members, County Commissioners)
- Representatives from health care provider associations
- Representatives from State Quality Initiative Organizations
- AARP representatives
- Media contacts – local newspapers and/or tv stations

Sample Agenda

Below is a suggested agenda for a Residents' Rights Rally to "kick-off" National Residents' Rights Month. Make changes to tailor the agenda for your special event.

Welcome and Opening Ceremony (15 minutes or less)

- Be sure to recognize speakers & participants – particularly resident participants from the various long-term care homes
- Invite someone from the Area Agency on Aging or the Ombudsman Program to make opening remarks

Presentations (30-45 minutes)

- Invite an elected official or someone else from the invite list to make some short remarks related to Residents' Rights
- Be sure to include a long-term care resident and/or family member to make remarks

Celebration Time! (30 minutes to however long is needed)

- Have an official share the Residents' Rights Month Proclamation (refer to promotional materials section of RR Month packet for sample proclamations)
- Include some entertainment (e.g. invite a resident choir to sing)
- End the celebration with a Residents' Rights Month cake!