Long-term Care Residents Honored During Residents’ Rights Week
October 7 – 13, 2007
Advancing Excellence: A Resident’s Perspective on Quality

Across the country, residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities -- along with family members, ombudsmen, citizen advocates, facility staff, and others -- will honor the individual rights of long-term care residents by celebrating Residents’ Rights Week October 7 – 13, 2007. Designated by NCCNHR, the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, the week highlights the importance of residents’ participation in discussions about improving the quality of care in their long-term care facilities. There are currently some 2.7 million Americans living in 62,000 nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and board and care homes across the country.

“This year we are commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Nursing Home Reform Law, which recognized residents’ rights to make individual choices in how they receive care and to form independent resident councils,” said Alice H. Hedt, NCCNHR Executive Director. “Services and activities in long-term care facilities should be planned with the input of those who live in the facility and experience them. This year’s theme, Advancing Excellence: A Resident’s Perspective on Quality, encourages residents across the country to express what quality care means to them. And, it urges long-term care facilities to make resident participation an integral part of advancing excellence.

“There is a national multi-stakeholder effort to Advance Excellence in America’s Nursing Homes and there are numerous quality initiatives to improve quality of long-term care,” Hedt explained. “Residents’ Rights Week 2007 reminds us that excellence can only be achieved when residents have the opportunity to define quality and to have meaningful input in the day to day decision making in facilities.”

The Nursing Home Reform Law guarantees nursing home residents their individual rights which include but are not limited to: individualized care, respect, dignity, the right to visitation, the right to privacy, the right to complain, and the right to make independent choices. Residents who have made their home in other types of facilities maintain their rights as US Citizens. Residents' Rights Week raises awareness about these rights and pays tribute to the unique contributions of long-term care residents.

The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has worked tirelessly for over 30 years to promote residents’ rights daily. More than 8,000 volunteers and 1,000 paid staff are advocates for residents in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Authorized under the Older Americans’ Act and administered by the Administration on Aging, the program also provides information on how to find a facility,
conducts community education sessions, and supports residents, their families and the public with one-on-one consultation regarding long-term care.

“Residents’ Rights Week is an excellent opportunity to re-affirm our collective commitment to residents’ rights and to honor long-term care residents. We strongly encourage the community to participate in Residents’ Rights Week activities and to visit residents who continue to be important to our communities and society,” Hedt said.

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