

THE RESIDENT ADVOCATE

A newsletter for long-term care residents containing news and information on rights, care issues, and updates on national policy.

IN THIS ISSUE

Tips for Living with a Roommate

New Staffing Standards in Nursing Homes

Steps to Take When There is a Problem in Your Nursing Home

October is Residents' Rights Month

Visiting During the Holidays

New Staffing Standards in Nursing Homes

This September the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the long-anticipated Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) that would establish a minimum staffing standard in nursing homes.

Learn more about the rule by scanning the QR code or visiting the link theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/staffing.



Tips for Living with a Roommate

Adjusting to living in a long-term care facility can be difficult for some individuals, and the challenges can increase if you share a room with a roommate. Living with a roommate should not decrease your quality of life, and there are many ways you can communicate and live peacefully with a new roommate.

Open and Respectful Communication

Communication and respect lay the foundation for good roommate relations. You may have things in common with your roommate, but there may also be differences that should be considered. Conflicts often surround things like morning and evening routines, the frequency and number of visitors, or noise from televisions or radios.

If you find yourself uncomfortable because of these differences, talk to your roommate about finding solutions. Lowering the volume on televisions at a certain time, or wearing a headset, could help if TVs are too loud. To avoid disturbing your roommate if they are sleeping or if it is late, visits with family or guests may take place in a lounge or other area.

Seek Assistance

Ask for help from the social worker or another staff member in finding solutions if problems persist. Consider asking for a change in room or roommate if conflicts cannot be resolved.

If you're having trouble, you can also reach out to your Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program for assistance, theconsumervoice.org/get_help.



Steps to Take When There is a Problem in Your Nursing Home

- **Discuss the problem with nursing home staff and administration.** Start with the staff member directly involved or social worker. If that doesn't help, work your way up the nursing home chain of command.
- **Raise your concerns at your next care plan meeting or request a special care plan meeting.** This is an opportunity to talk about what can be done and develop a solution.
- **Use the facility grievance process.** Facilities are required to have a grievance process. Ask for a copy of the grievance policy and follow the process to file a complaint or concern. The facility must work to resolve the problem promptly. You must receive a written response telling you what was done to investigate the complaint, the findings, whether the complaint was confirmed, and any action the facility has taken or will take to correct the problem.
- **Contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.** The Ombudsman program advocates for residents, and can often help with questions or resolve concerns. Find your Ombudsman program by visiting, theconsumervoice.org/get_help.
- **File a complaint with the State Survey Agency (SSA).** This agency is responsible for overseeing nursing homes in your state. One of its duties is to investigate complaints. You can file anonymously, and your Ombudsman can help. Find information about how to file a complaint with your SSA by visiting, <https://bit.ly/3EWqj3S>.

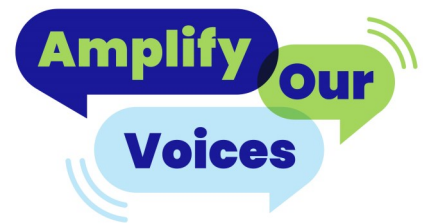
Visiting During the Holidays

As the end of year holidays approach, your nursing home may see an increase in the number of visitors. Each resident has the right to see visitors of your choosing at the time you choose, and you are free to leave your facility to visit with friends and family, participate in community activities, or for any other reason. Your facility cannot deny your visitors access or keep you from going out of your facility – if they do, reach out to your Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, theconsumervoice.org/get_help.

We also advise all nursing home residents, their families, friends, and staff members to stay up to date with all important vaccinations as we move into winter, including COVID-19, the flu, and RSV, to stay healthy and safe through the holidays.

For more information and resources on how to advocate for yourself, visit theconsumervoice.org, call 202-332-2275, or email us at info@theconsumervoice.org.

October is Residents' Rights Month!



National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

Residents' Rights Month is an annual event celebrated each October to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities.

This year's theme – **Amplify Our Voices** – emphasizes a community of long-term care residents coming together to make their voices heard.

Amplifying your voice means being outspoken about sharing your preferences and choices and sharing who you are and your experiences.

Residents' voices are the most important at the decision-making table – your story deserves to be heard!



Resident's Voice Challenge entry by William Shields, Claude Melton, and Michael Dowell



The National
CONSUMER VOICE
for Quality Long-Term Care