

THE RESIDENT ADVOCATE

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

To find resources and information referenced in this issue, read the online version: theconsumervoice.org/issues/recipients/nursing-home-residents/resident-advocate

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Advocating for Better Care

After COVID-19, there has been a renewed push to improve conditions in nursing homes and provide increased protections for residents. Wide-ranging nursing home reforms have been proposed to help improve the quality of care and quality of life for residents. The reforms include efforts to create better staffing standards and training, ensure better preparation during emergencies, hold owners accountable for the care provided in their nursing homes, and more.

Advocacy is needed to get these reforms implemented! As a resident of a nursing home, use this opportunity to speak up and share your opinions and experiences to help shape these reforms!

Initiatives that may be of specific interest to you include:

- Establishing the minimum amount of staff on duty in a nursing home.
- Giving more residents private rooms to themselves.
- Making sure residents aren't receiving unnecessary medications and treatments.

Ways you can contribute your voice:

- Join a Resident Council and talk with other residents about improvements you'd like to see in your home.
- Join Consumer Voice's Consumer Advisory Council.
- Send messages to your local, state, or federal policymakers and share your stories and experiences with them.
- Write a letter to a local newspaper or use social media to share your experience.

Find additional resources for advocates on our website.



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.

Join the Consumer Voice's Consumer Advisory Council!

Connect with other residents from across the country and provide input on national policy issues.

Email us!

info@theconsumervoice.org



Get Ready to Vote!

This year is a midterm election year, and midterm elections are important! Midterm elections are an opportunity to vote not only for your representatives in Congress, but also for those representing you locally. Your state may be electing a governor or members of the state legislature, while your city may be electing a mayor.

There may also be elections for judges and other local officials. These public officials will make key decisions in your state and locality, so it is important to cast your vote!

Long-term care facilities must work with residents to ensure you are able to vote. If you experience any issues with voting, contact your local ombudsman, who can help advocate on your behalf. Find your long-term care Ombudsman program at theconsumervoice.org/get_help.

Questions to Ask to Make Sure You are Ready to Vote

- What options do you have for casting your ballot? During these last few years, many states have changed their voting laws, so double check!
 - If you need to vote in-person, do you know where your polling place is?
 - What kind of transportation can bring you to your polling site? Know that nursing homes are required to support your right to vote, such as assisting with an absentee or mail-in ballot or helping to arrange transportation to ballot drop-off boxes or polling sites.
 - If your state allows voting by mail/absentee voting, do you know how you will get your ballot and how you will return it when it's completed?
- Is this facility a polling place?
- Will the facility host forums or invite candidates to the facility so residents can discuss candidates and platforms?
- Where are you registered to vote?



Find additional information and resources on voting on our website, theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/voting-rights.

What Residents Say About Staffing



Nursing homes with more staff are higher rated overall, get better health inspections, and are less likely to have instances of abuse. More staff means better care and better quality of lives for residents.

"In my facility, if they can improve on the staff level that would help with infection control because when you have **two CNAs covering 60 residents** it is very difficult to be as tight with infection control as it should be."

"We have been very short staffed this entire year. People are leaving in every department. **We are down to between a quarter to half the staff of what we used to have.**"

"We have about 20 residents to an aide. **If you are needing more assistance than one person it means long wait times.**"

"The ratios per resident, **there are many days where I have 10 minutes or less per day with an aide.** It is usually about 10 minutes per day with a nurse."

"I would like to see federally mandated laws that would say there can only be so many residents per nurse and per CNA. I believe the prison population has stricter rules than nursing homes. **I think that is something that is badly needed, in an emergency if there aren't enough nurses, you have to worry that your family member is not going to be seen or taken care of.**"

Listen to these resident quotes in a video on our website.

October is Residents' Rights Month!



Residents' Rights Month is an annual event to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities. This year's theme - **Inspiring Unity within Our Community** - emphasizes the importance of fostering meaningful community within a facility and encouraging residents' connection to their local community. Throughout the pandemic, residents were isolated from their community - both within and outside the long-term care facility, and many residents suffered.

The Resident's Voice Challenge is an opportunity for long-term care consumers to respond to and reflect on this year's theme. Resident's Voice entries can include original essays, poems, artwork, photos, or videos. This year, we are encouraging group entries created by two or more residents. **Submissions are due September 1, 2022.**

Email info@theconsumervoice.org or mail to 1025 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036. Visit our website for more information and resources.