



## October is Residents' Rights Month 2019

### STAND for QUALITY

“Residents’ Rights Month” is an annual event to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities.

It is a chance to celebrate awareness of dignity, respect, and the rights of each resident.

This year's theme, "Stand for Quality," emphasizes the importance of quality in all aspects of residents’ experiences – quality care, quality of life, quality services, and quality choices – to name a few.

More information about your rights and Residents’ Rights Month can be found at <https://theconsumervoice.org/events/2019-residents-rights-month>.

# — THE RESIDENT ADVOCATE —

The Resident Advocate - a newsletter for residents of long-term care facilities containing news and information on rights and care issues, plus updates on national policy.

## Know Your Medications

While medicine is important for healthcare, in some cases it can cause more harm than good. Antipsychotic drugs affect the brain and influence thinking, feeling, and reacting. Used correctly, these drugs treat symptoms of psychosis, which can include hallucinations and delusions, and can enhance quality of life. The improper use of antipsychotic medications can lead to harmful side effects like pain, confusion, falls, and an increased chance of stroke, especially in those with dementia. In some cases, antipsychotic drugs are given when residents show signs of distress in place of good care, this is known as a chemical restraint. Federal nursing home laws prohibit the use of chemical restraints and unnecessary drugs. The law also requires that nursing homes provide quality care, so individuals reach or maintain their highest level of well-being. It’s a good idea to know about the medications you’re taking. Ask your doctor or the nurse in charge why you are taking each drug, what the potential side effects are, and if there are any other options. You can also request a care plan meeting to talk about better or different care strategies. Caregivers should first work to identify and treat underlying problems, such as pain, dehydration, infection, or fear, that can cause agitation, confusion, or other changes.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program advocates for and with residents. Contact the program if you have concerns about your care and need help. Find your Ombudsman at [https://theconsumervoice.org/get\\_help](https://theconsumervoice.org/get_help).

## It’s Your Right: Participate in Your Plan of Care

Care plans are the blueprint for the care and services you are to receive. Your care plan is unique to you and tells how your care needs and goals will be met. You have the right to quality care. In a care planning meeting, you and the staff talk about life in the facility—meals, activities, therapies, personal schedule, medical and nursing care, and emotional needs. You can bring up problems, ask questions, or offer information to help staff provide care. You have the right to participate in the development of your care plan. This plan can include strategies for both medical and non-medical needs and goals.

Before your meeting, it is good to be prepared. Think about the things you want to be included in your care plan. Speak up at the meeting and make sure to ask questions if there is something you don’t understand. Before your plan is completed, read it over, make sure everything you want is stated in the plan. When your plan has been created, ask for a copy. If your plan is not being followed, or if the plan is not working for you, don’t be afraid to speak up. Ask staff to go over your care plan and make any changes, if needed.



## Residents Around the Nation Participate in the Resident's Voice Challenge!



“ I never have to give a thought in regard to my rights. All staff; from clerical, medical, nursing, and maintenance are very aware of my rights. The important thing for residents to know is to never stop talking to people until your right is met. Assuming a person or resident does not have cognitive dysfunction is not right, I think we residents have the responsibility to respond to staff politely and courteously. Many staff members become like family to us. It seems to me that if residents follow the “Golden Rule” when it comes to responding to staff and employees, there would be no need to make sure our rights are followed. ”

- Tim C., Nursing Home Resident from Michigan

“ Living in a Long Term Care facility, I don't determine the quality of my life. It is shaped by them, forces external to me, the regulators of the LTC institution. But they can aid the shaping of life's quality – or they can obstruct my quality of living. At eighty-six, I'm on the final journey of my life. Disabled, I'm in need of a caring hand to grasp as I travel this path. Living in a Long Term Care facility, the hand may be available, but not ready to grip. My journey – the quality of my remaining years - is in the hands of a caregiver. ”

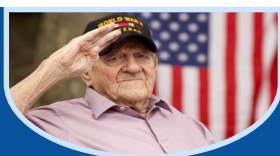
- Dick W., Assisted Living Resident



## Celebrate Residents' Rights Month with these Activity Ideas!

- **Do it Yourself Door Hangers** - Visit the Consumer Voice website and print a black and white “I Stand for Quality” door hanger template to decorate as you wish.
- **Pets Day** - Work with your local animal shelter, local companion pet service, or have family members bring in pets to have some quality time for residents and staff with furry friends!
- **Residents' Rights Posters** - Clip images & words from magazines or express yourself artistically to create posters about what residents' rights mean to you.

Find additional activity ideas on our website: <https://theconsumervoice.org/events/2019-residents-rights-month/activities>.



For more information, visit  
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The National  
**CONSUMER VOICE**  
for Quality Long-Term Care  
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