

# THE RESIDENT ADVOCATE

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

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## Join the Consumer Advisory Council

Consumer Voice's Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) is made up of current and former long-term care residents across the country who advocate for change on the local, state, and national level!

The CAC meets monthly to discuss issues facing long-term care consumers. Members help inform Consumer Voice policy decisions and advocate alongside our organization.

To join a supportive community of like-minded advocates working toward the same goals, or recommend a long-term care consumer, email [info@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:info@theconsumervoice.org).

## Nursing Home Residents Have Right to Language Assistance

Ensuring nursing home residents can access and receive information in a language they understand is essential for promoting informed decision making and high-quality care.

Nursing home regulations state that residents have the right to language assistance services if needed. This right is reinforced throughout the regulations. While a recent executive order was issued declaring English the official language of the United States, this right has not changed.

The regulations specifically require that nursing home residents who do not speak English or who have limited English proficiency be provided language assistance.

### Some examples include:

- The right to be informed of and participate in treatment in a language that the resident can understand. (483.10(c)(1))
- The right to be informed of resident rights and the rules governing resident conduct and responsibilities in a language that residents can understand. (483.10(g))
- The right for the resident (or their representative) to be notified before transfer or discharge, in writing, in a language the resident can understand. (483.15(c)(3))

If you, or someone you know, is not receiving this assistance, reach out to your long-term care Ombudsman program, [theconsumervoice.org/get-help](https://theconsumervoice.org/get-help), and share your story with the Consumer Voice at [theconsumervoice.org/consumer-center/#tell-story](https://theconsumervoice.org/consumer-center/#tell-story).

You can additionally file a complaint with your state survey agency by visiting, [theconsumervoice.org/filing-a-complaint](https://theconsumervoice.org/filing-a-complaint).



# Staying Safe During Outbreaks

As recent cases of measles outbreaks emerge in multiple states, concerns about the health and safety of nursing home residents and staff are growing. Understanding residents' rights and facility responsibilities around infection prevention and control is critical to promoting the well-being of all those living and working in a facility.

Nursing homes are responsible for establishing a program to prevent, recognize, and control the onset and spread of communicable diseases and infections among residents, staff, and visitors. Such a program must include, at a minimum, a system of monitoring to identify possible infections or infectious diseases; reporting of incidents; precautions to be followed to prevent spread of infectious diseases; whether, when, and how separating or cohorting residents should be employed; and hygiene procedures to be followed by staff involved in direct resident contact. The facility must also designate a qualified Infection Preventionist who is responsible for implementing and overseeing its infection prevention and control program.

To make informed decisions about their care and well-being, residents and their representatives need to be informed about any communicable disease or infection identified in the facility – how it is transmitted, symptoms, available vaccines or treatments; and about the facility's infection prevention and control program and how it is being implemented. Either individually, or as part of a Resident Council or Family Council, healthcare providers, Facility Administrators, Directors of Nursing, and/or Infection Preventionist should discuss these issues with residents and their families

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease with symptoms such as high fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a distinctive rash. Some will need the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine or a booster. People born before 1957 are likely immune due to probable measles exposure. People born after 1989 who have received the MMR vaccine are typically fully vaccinated and do not need a booster. People born after 1957 but before 1989 may need a booster to ensure full immunity. Residents and their representatives are encouraged to discuss their health status and whether they need a vaccine or booster with their healthcare professional.

Residents having trouble accessing their medical information, problems receiving assistance from the nursing home, or problems connecting with their healthcare provider, should contact their local long-term care ombudsman for help. The ombudsman is an advocate for residents and helps to resolve problems. All calls to the ombudsman are confidential and free.

**Need help locating the local long-term care ombudsman? Go to [theconsumervoice.org/get-help/](http://theconsumervoice.org/get-help/)**

**For more information and resources** on how to advocate for yourself, visit [theconsumervoice.org](http://theconsumervoice.org), call 202-332-2275, or email us at [info@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:info@theconsumervoice.org).

## October is Residents' Rights Month!

### Stand with me



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 – **Stand with Me** - highlights the importance of solidarity and support for residents who stand up and advocate for their rights, as well as the value of encouraging the community to join residents in sharing their voices.

The goal is to foster an environment where residents and the community can lean on each other when faced with challenges in long-term care, adapt to change, and grow stronger together!



*Resident's Voice Challenge entry by Kula Hospital 4th Floor.*



The National  
**CONSUMER VOICE**  
for Quality Long-Term Care