



Om·buds·man

Ombudsmen work to resolve problems related to the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals who live in licensed long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, personal care homes, assisted living facilities, or receive long-term care services in the community.

An Ombudsman is someone who cares and is able to help. Your information will be kept confidential and the program's services are provided at no cost.

GECAC's Area Agency on Aging is designated by the state to address the needs and concerns of all older persons in Erie County. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program supports and empowers all residents living in or receiving long-term care services in Erie County.



How Do I Contact the Ombudsman?

You may contact us in writing, by phone, online, or in person by appointment. When you contact the Ombudsman, we will listen to your concerns and discuss options for further action. The consent of the resident or responsible party is necessary prior to any contact with facility staff. An appropriate outcome is one that is agreed upon and decided by the resident or responsible party.

 (814) 459-4581 ext. 593

 ombudsman@gecac.org

 Greater Erie Community Action Committee
Ombudsman Program
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GREATER ERIE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

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HOW THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN CAN HELP



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How Can the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Help?

The Ombudsman is a trained professional who helps protect resident rights and ensure the quality care of individuals living in long-term care facilities. The basis of the Ombudsman program is the “expressed wish” of the resident. The Ombudsman educates residents about options available to resolve a complaint, encouraging personal empowerment through education. Options may include making the facility staff aware of an issue, arranging a meeting with the facility staff, or seeking assistance from licensing agencies.

Who Can Call the Ombudsman?

- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Relatives and friends of residents
- Concerned facility staff
- Any person concerned about residents’ treatment



Family members can find comfort knowing that the Ombudsman is available to their loved ones when they need assistance navigating the complex long-term care system. Ombudsmen help with information about regulations, resident rights, and assuring quality care for their loved ones. Ombudsmen visit facilities on a regular basis to assure quality of life for all residents.



What Do Ombudsmen Do?

Ombudsmen are specially trained and certified and have authority under Pennsylvania law to identify, investigate and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, long-term care facility residents. Ombudsmen are able to be advocates for the residents of these facilities. Our priority is to protect the rights of long-term care residents and ensure residents receive fair treatment and appropriate care by:

- Making routine, unannounced facility visits
- Identifying, investigating, and resolving complaints
- Ensuring residents are receiving individualized care to meet their needs
- Educating residents, families, and staff about residents’ rights and facility regulations

What Kinds of Complaints Can Be Investigated?

Complaints may be made about persons or institutions that interfere with the rights, health, safety, and/or welfare of one or more long-term care facility residents. We are able to investigate concerns regarding resident rights or the delivery of care that affects the dignity and respect residents deserve.

Do I Have to Give My Name?

The name of the resident and the person making the complaint and all other relevant details will be kept confidential unless the complainant or the resident gives the Ombudsman permission to disclose that information.

What Are Residents’ Rights?

When individuals enter long-term care facilities, they keep all their rights as citizens and gain a special set of residents’ rights as outlined in federal and state law. Facilities must post a copy of these rights in an area that is easily accessible to residents and they must also provide a copy to each resident upon admission. Resident rights encompass areas of the resident’s care, treatment, privacy, facility services, and policies.

Become an Empowered Expert Resident!

Pennsylvania’s Empowered Expert Residents (PEER) are long-term care residents who are trained by the Ombudsman to self-advocate and empower their fellow residents to improve their quality of life and quality of care. PEER is a partnership between residents, facility staff, and the Ombudsman. Contact your Ombudsman to learn about being part of the PEER Program in your facility.