



FLORIDA OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

ADVOCATING FOR QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE

A Message from the State Ombudsman



Hi everyone – Happy New Year!

2023 was an exciting, busy, and productive year for our program, with many changes outlined to enhance our footprint and serve more seniors.

With just a week into 2024, I can already tell that this year will be as exciting as last! While 2023 had us digging deep into our processes, uncovering our gaps, and identifying challenges, 2024 will be our year of implementation.

So, what can you expect in the upcoming year?

1. Continued visibility and awareness of our program! After our successful volunteer recruitment campaign, we are still onboarding new volunteers as quickly as possible.
2. A new database! – We are in the final stages of procurement for our new database. The transition will be exciting AND challenging, but nothing our team can't handle.
3. Training, Training, Training! – I can't emphasize enough how critical it is for our team to continue to gel and sing out of the same hymnal. We will continue to meet as a team regularly and flush out inconsistencies as we find them.
4. Collaboration! – Continued collaboration with our sister agencies, leaders in the industry, and each other will be critical to strengthening our foundation as one Florida Team!

I am hopeful for the coming year as we wrap up some projects and begin others. I know we are a stronger team because of all our hard work in 2023, and I can't wait to see all we can accomplish for seniors this year. Watch out, 2024 – here we come!

Terri Cantrell
State Ombudsman

Volunteer Spotlight

Russell Jahn has been an Ombudsman for the past ten years. He brings dedication and experience to the residents that he encounters. He is a true advocate who is referred to as the "calm in the storm." Russ has a very calming demeanor can genuinely connect with the residents that he assists. Russ also serves as the council chair for the First Coast District. Working beside Russ and advocating for Florida's residents is a true pleasure for staff and volunteers.

Thank you, Russ, for all you do!



Save the Date



STATE TRAINING
CONFERENCE
SAVE THE DATE

April 16-18

Holiday Inn & Suites
Across from Universal
Orlando, FL

More details to come

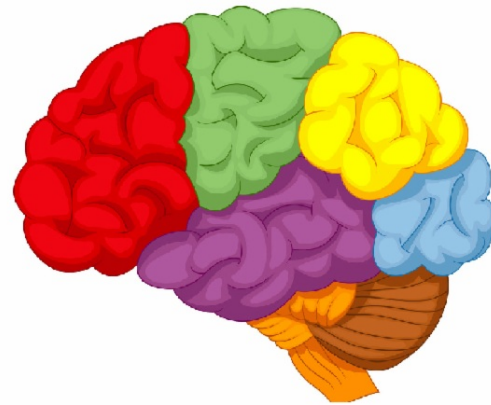
5 Surprising Benefits of Volunteering

5 Suprising Benefits of VOLUNTEERING

1

Decrease Risk of Dementia

Researchers found that the people who had volunteered at least one hour a week were 2.44 times less likely to develop dementia than those who had never volunteered.



2

Feel More Connected to Others

A 2018 study found a strong correlation between volunteering and social well-being.

3

Makes You Happier

Participating in community service is a strong predictor of life satisfaction. A recent study discovered that people who volunteered more, tended to report fewer symptoms of depression.



4

Reduce Risk of High Blood Pressure

Regular volunteers were less likely to develop hypertension than non-volunteers. Volunteering 200+ hours is linked to lower likelihood of high blood pressure.

5

Feel a Stronger Sense of Purpose

Volunteering provides a greater sense of purpose and help you feel more connected to your community. Volunteering boosts your mental health.



2024 Legislative Session Bills of Interest

January 9, 2024 - Regular Session convenes (Article III, section 3(b), State Constitution)

February 27, 2024 - 50th day – Last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings (Senate Rule 2.9(2))

March 8, 2024 - 60th day – Last day of Regular Session (Article III, section 3(d), State Constitution)

SB 426/HB 1921: Community Associations – Creation of an HOA Ombudsman within DBPR

<https://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/426/BillText/Filed/PDF>

SB 208/HB 801: Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia Training for Law Enforcement Officers
<https://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/208/BillText/Filed/PDF>

SB 376/HB 695: Delivery of Patient Protection
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/376/BillText/Filed/PDF>
Delivery of Patient Protection: Citing this act as the “Florida Patient Protection Act”; requiring health care facilities to implement staffing plans that comply with specified minimum staffing levels for direct care registered nurses; requiring that patients be cared for only in hospital or clinical units that meet the specified minimum staffing levels; providing whistle-blower protections; providing for complaints to and administrative actions by the Agency for Health Care Administration; prohibiting employers from taking specified actions concerning employment for certain unionized staff, etc.

SB 174/HB 725: Veterans' Long-term Care Facilities Admissions
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/725/BillText/Filed/PDF>
Veterans' Long-term Care Facilities Admissions: Revises eligibility for residency in Veterans' Domiciliary Home of Florida to include specified individuals; adds such individuals to priority of admittance schedule; revises admission eligibility for veterans' nursing homes to include specified persons; revises priority of admittance to include such persons.

SB 726/HB 949: Priority Enrollment for Medicaid Home and Community-based Services
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/726/BillText/Filed/PDF>
Priority Enrollment for Medicaid Home and Community-based Services: Adds specified individuals to the list of those who are afforded priority enrollment for Medicaid home & community-based services through long-term care managed care program & do not have to complete screening or wait-list process.

SB 952/HB 891: Health Care Transparency
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/952/BillText/Filed/PDF>
Health Care Transparency: Requiring licensed nursing home facilities to report to the Agency for Health Care Administration any common ownership relationships they or their parent companies share with certain entities; requiring the agency to work with stakeholders to determine how to present such information on an easily accessible online dashboard; requiring the agency to submit annual reports on the success of the personal care attendant program to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date, etc.

SB 798/HB 1343: Health Care Patient Protection
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/798/BillText/Filed/PDF>
Health Care Patient Protection: Adding additional disqualifying offenses to background screening requirements for certain persons in health care practice settings; defining the term “memory care provider”; requiring memory care providers to employ specified practices in the provision of memory care services; adding additional disqualifying offenses to level 2 background screening standards, etc.

SB 828/HB 1003: Coverage for Orthotics and Prosthetics Services
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/828/BillText/Filed/PDF>
Coverage for Orthotics and Prosthetics Services: Authorizing the Agency for Health Care Administration to pay for specified orthotics and prosthetics services for Medicaid recipients; requiring individual health insurance policies, group, blanket, and franchise health insurance policies, and health maintenance contracts, respectively, to provide coverage for specified orthotics and prosthetics services; prohibiting health insurers and health maintenance organizations from denying claims under certain circumstances, etc.

SB 412/HB 1387: Adult Day Care Centers
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/1387/BillText/Filed/PDF>
Adult Day Care Centers: Provides fee schedules for Medicaid reimbursement for services provided by adult day care centers; provides continuing education requirements for adult date care center operators; provides required subject areas for continuing education courses; authorizes courses to be offered in person or online; requires operators to pass online examinations with the specified minimum score; provides compliance with continuing education requirements is condition precedent to issuance, continuation, reinstatement, & renewal of adult day care center licenses.

