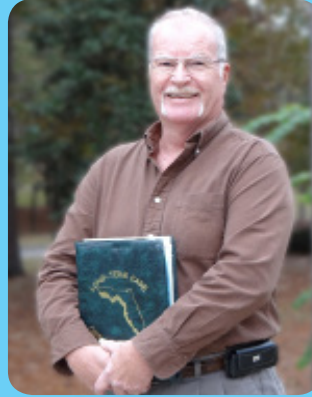


# Florida's Long-Term Care OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

*Advocates for Quality Care*



Improving the  
quality of life  
for long-term care  
residents



**2012- 2013  
ANNUAL REPORT**

## What is the Ombudsman Program?

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is made up of over 350 *volunteers* who are passionate about improving the quality of life for residents living in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult family-care homes.

Each year, the Ombudsman Program is required to publish and present its year-end statistics and recommendations for improvement to federal and state policy makers.

Two women are standing against a blue background. The woman on the left has curly blonde hair and is wearing a black blazer. The woman on the right has straight blonde hair and is wearing a black dress with white polka dots. They are both smiling and holding a large white rectangular sign.

**Anombudsman  
advocatesforthe  
rights, health,  
welfareandsafety  
ofpeoplelivingin  
long-term care  
settings**

## Dear Long-Term Care Ombudsman Supporter:

As Interim State Ombudsman I have had the unique opportunity to step in and assess the status of this important program. What I found was a cadre of dedicated staff and a small army of caring volunteers working hard, day in and day out, to help our residents stay safe and healthy in Florida's long-term care facilities.



What makes this program unique is the dedication and concern demonstrated by the staff and volunteer ombudsmen. Their dedication is exemplified by the efforts ombudsmen make to respond to the thousands of requests that the program receives each year. Travelling to more than 4000 facilities takes effort. Talking to many of the 170,000 residents we serve takes time, patience and understanding. Working with facility staff and administrators takes skill and persistence. The result of this dedication is a careful and professional response to each and every complaint and substantive feedback following each administrative assessment.

The concern for long-term care residents is expressed by our ombudsmen in a variety of ways. Above all, the ombudsman is an advocate for residents' rights, supporting individuals and families exercising those rights, and being a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves. Beyond the individual rights issues, however, is a concern for the quality of life of all the residents in long-term care. Whenever an ombudsman is in a facility, through observation and interviews, he or she seeks to work with residents and staff to make life better for everyone who live there. Supporting resident and family councils, reinforcing laws and regulations and staying up to date on best practices in the industry are ways the ombudsman tries to influence the quality of care in every facility.

“Advocates for Quality Care” is the new byline for the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. We hope it communicates both the dedication and concern that are demonstrated every day in our state by our caring volunteers and staff. Your continued support for our mission is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



James M. (Jim) Croteau, Ph.D.  
Interim State Ombudsman

## 2012-2013

### Policy and Regulatory Recommendations

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (the “LTCOP”) is charged with recommending policy and regulatory changes designed to improve the quality of life of residents of long-term care facilities. The recommendations should address residents’ lives and quality of care, the protection of residents’ rights, and the removal of barriers to the optimal operation of the ombudsman program. The LTCOP has briefly identified several of the areas for consideration for policy and regulatory changes as follows:

- The LTCOP continues to support the efforts to revise the statutes and rules governing the operation of Assisted Living Facilities to enhance the professionalism of staff, increase the accountability of contracted mental health service providers, reduce discretionary fines for non-compliance, and to require facilities to emphasize the ability of a resident to present grievances without the fear of retaliation. In addition, the LTCOP supports the aging-in-place initiatives in the proposed regulations that give options and added flexibility to residents and their families.
- Increase funding for the assistive care services and optional state supplementation budget categories to assist in meeting the costs of care of vulnerable populations.
- Modernize the LTCOP enabling statute (Part I, Chapter 400, F.S.) to bring flexibility and efficiencies to the program. Realigning the internal operating structure and procedures for the LTCOP will retarget ombudsman resources to complaint investigations and training that emphasize the dignity and quality of life of residents, as well as provide needed conformity with the federal Older Americans Act.



Susan Anderson



# YEAR IN REVIEW

The Florida's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) achieved new milestones in success during the past year. Here are some of the highlights and accomplishments that the Ombudsman Program's dedicated staff and volunteers have achieved:

**366** Number of Volunteers

**7,101** Facility Assessments and Visitations Statewide

**88,000** Estimated Unpaid Hours Worked

**313,688** Miles Traveled (by Staff and Volunteers)

**\$1,861,737** Estimated Average of Savings

During October, each fiscal year begins with celebrating Resident's Rights Month. Activities, council meetings and presentations center around the specific rights extended to long-term care residents and facilities across the state.



Governor Rick Scott presented a Volunteer Florida Champion of Service Award to Linda Putnam. The Governor said, "It is an honor to present the Champion of Service Award to these hardworking, deserving volunteers. Their commitment to helping others is commendable and I thank them for their continued service."

## Top 5 Complaints in Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs) and Adult Family-Care Homes

1. Menu
2. Medications Administration, Organization
3. Dignity, Respect - Staff Attitudes
4. Cleanliness, Pests, General Housekeeping
5. Equipment/Buildings

## Top 5 Complaints in Nursing Homes

1. Dignity, Respect - Staff Attitudes
2. Personal Hygiene
3. Failure to Respond to Requests for Assistance
4. Medication Administration, Organization
5. Discharge/Eviction



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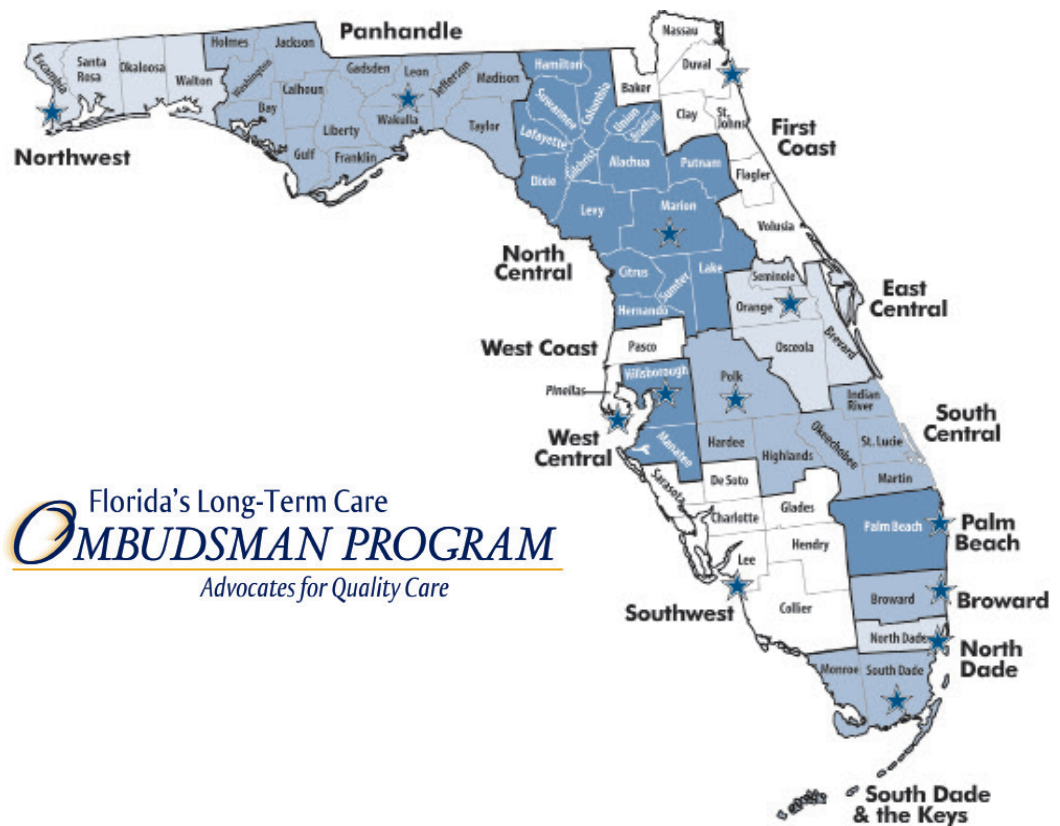
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Florida's Long-Term Care  
**OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM**  
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# Quarterly Ombudsman Program Data

## FY 2012-2013

Oct - Dec

Jan - March

April - June

July - Sept

**Number of Beds**

169,950

168,406

168,975

169,712

**Number of Volunteer  
Ombudsman**

356

346

363

366

**Facility Visitations**

482

829

924

767

**Facility Assesments**

748

991

994

1,359

**Complaint Investigations**

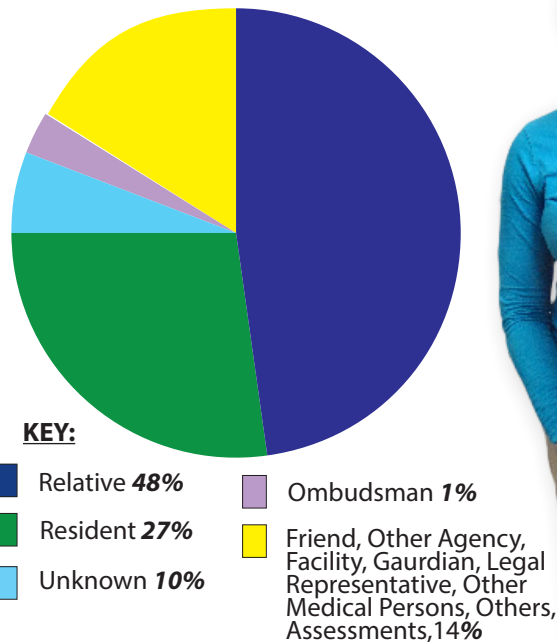
2,864

2,442

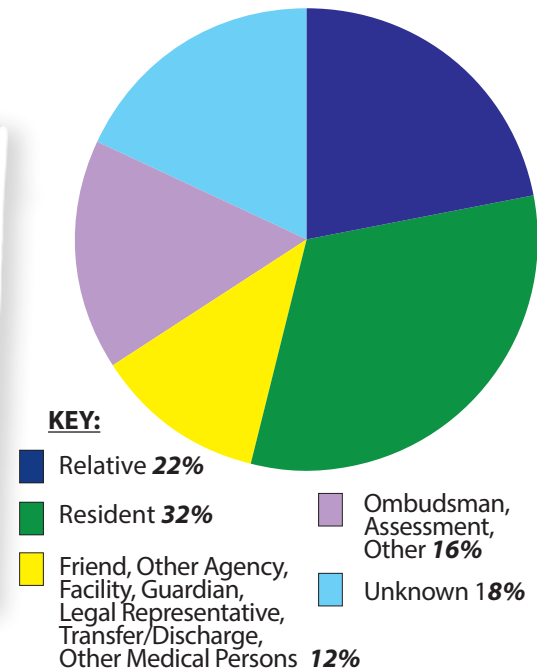
2,370

2,570

## Origin of Complaints in Nursing Homes



## Origin of Complaints in ALFs, Independent Living Facilities, and Adult Family-Care Homes

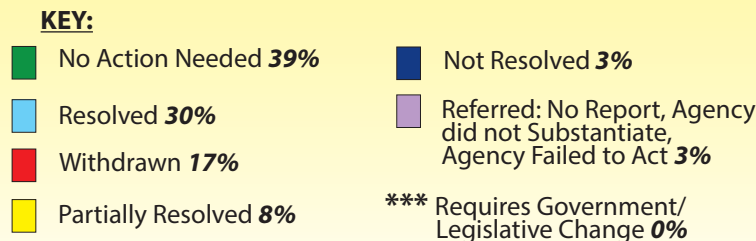


**2,919**  
Cases Accepted

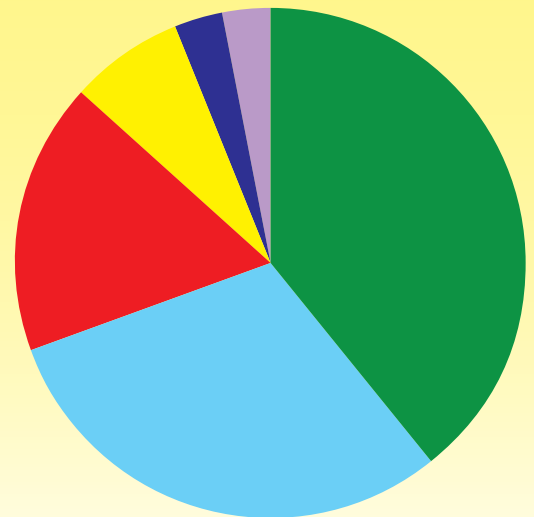
**6,471**  
Complaints Accepted

**313,688**  
Miles Traveled

When a complaint case is closed, one of nine disposition codes is assigned: no action needed, withdrawn, resolved, partially resolved, not resolved, referred-no report, referred-agency failed to act, referred-agency did not substantiate, and requires government/legislative change. Although complaint investigations may result in any one of these codes, the ombudsman strives to advocate for the resident to resolve each complaint to the resident's satisfaction by working with facility staff members, family members, or other agencies on the resident's behalf. Some complaints require legislative change for a satisfactory resolution for the resident; others require referral to another agency.



## Complaint Resolution



# Florida's Long-Term Care OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

*Advocates for Quality Care*



## Become an Expert in Resident Rights and Volunteer with Florida's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program!

We are seeking conscientious individuals who want to make a difference. All it takes is a caring spirit, a willingness to learn and a little time and energy.

Volunteering for Florida's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a great opportunity for gaining advocacy skills and experiences from a federal and state mandated organization. Our volunteers train to learn investigative and assessment skills, eventually becoming experts in resident rights.

This program is a perfect opportunity for retired and unemployed citizens, as well as for college students and everyday folks who want to make a difference.

Are you our next Ombudsman? To request an application to volunteer and to find out more about the Ombudsman Program, please call us today toll-free at 1(888) 831-0404. You can also visit us on-line on our website [ombudsman.myflorida.com](http://ombudsman.myflorida.com) or find our page on Facebook. We look forward to hearing from you!



### **VOLUNTEER**

Call Us Toll-Free  
1 (888) 831-0404

Visit Us Online  
[ombudsman.myflorida.com](http://ombudsman.myflorida.com)



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