



Florida

OMBUDSMAN OUTLOOK

VOLUME 20

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FLORIDA'S LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE OMBUDSMAN



Leigh Davis

State Ombudsman
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

As we enter the New Year, I am looking forward to the upcoming 2015 legislative session. Since last March, the Program has moved into a more positive direction and has accomplished huge achievements statewide. We are continuing to improve our internal processes in order to better serve residents in long-term care facilities.

The Program's 2015 proposed legislation seeks to change the internal operating structure and procedures in order to conform the ombudsman statute to the requirements of

the federal Older Americans Act, 42 U.S.C. § 3058g, by:

- revising and providing definitions;
- giving the state ombudsman the final authority in certifying individuals as ombudsmen;
- clarifying the duties of the state ombudsman in relation to the duties of ombudsmen in general;
- updating the names of positions that receive LTCOP reporting of annual activities;
- updating terminology in relation to local councils and districts and allowing ombudsmen to serve in neighboring districts for good cause shown;
- clarifying duties of the state ombudsman advisory council;
- clarifying duties of ombudsman districts and clarifying background screening and training requirements for appointment as a certified ombudsman;
- separating complaint procedures from administrative assessment procedures;
- clarifying citizen access to ombudsman services and providing for the prohibition of retaliatory action against a resident who presents grievances, and
- providing for conforming provisions.

These revisions will refocus our resources to resident-centered complaint resolution. They also emphasize the duties of ombudsmen in resolving resident complaints as a mediator or facilitator.

Our mission and focus continues to be to improve the quality of life for all Florida long-term care residents, and I am hopeful that we will have a successful legislative session that will enable us to better accomplish this goal.



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AWARDS

Ombudsmen Volunteer Celebrate 10 - Plus Years of Service with the Program

Volunteer ombudsmen are the core of our program and seek to ensure the health, safety, welfare and rights of long-term residents throughout Florida. They are community members from all walks of life who are passionate about improving the lives of residents living in long-term care facilities. Several ombudsmen were recently honored for their 10-plus years of service with the program. Those who have served 10-plus years with the program include: Patricia Reilly (10 years), Fernando Serrado (10 years), Linda Putnam (36 years), Ruth Battle-Hall (16 years), Kathleen Vermette (12 years), Carol Weideman (12 years), Joann Emerson (13 years), Joann Farrell (12 years) and Lorraine Domanski (15 years). Each ombudsman volunteer received an award with their name and years of service inscribed on it.



Lorraine Domanski – West Coast Office

Lorraine demonstrates endless efforts to train quality ombudsmen and improve the quality of life for Florida's seniors. As a testament to her

commitment, she achieved Pasco & North Pinellas Council Ombudsman of the Year in 2007 and 2014. During her tenure, Lorraine has held various positions, including District Chair, District Vice Chair, and District Trainer. Letters of appreciation from legislators, residents, and family members thank her for her advocacy. Lorraine remains a driving force in the district as an ombudsman trainer, dedicating countless hours training new ombudsmen. She provides every resident and ombudsman with the stability and consistency necessary to provide quality advocacy.

Carol Weideman – West Coast Office

Carol previously served as State Council Chair and Vice District Chair and is currently District Chair and District Trainer. Carol is committed to improving the ombudsman program with her ideas and advocacy on both the state and local levels. She actively serves on the Recruitment and Retention Workgroup at the district level, helping to ensure stability within the council. Carol assists at the District Wide Resident Council meetings to empower residents to advocate for themselves and each other.



Patricia Reilly – West Coast Office

Patricia has been a pivotal member of the Pasco & North Pinellas Council serving multiple years as Vice Chair and District Trainer. She is very dedicated in her role as an ombudsman, assisting residents; assuring that their voices are heard and their rights are respected. She is a tremendous asset to the program.



Linda Putnam – Panhandle Office

Linda has served on the Panhandle Council for over 30 years. This now "semi-retired" grandmother still finds time to give back to Florida's most vulnerable residents in long-term care

facilities. The Panhandle Office values her strong work ethic, collaboration on complaint cases, and her positive attitude. She has served as council chairman, trained volunteers, and assisted with special events for the district. She takes her role as an advocate seriously and is an asset to our program.



Joann Farrell – Palm Beach Office

Joann recently celebrated 12 years of service with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. She has held various positions during her tenure, including District Chair and District

Trainer. She was also a member of a multi-agency task force in Palm Beach County which conducted monthly spot checks in facilities.

Joann is very passionate in her role as an ombudsman and is committed to her work as a volunteer. She is always available to take additional complaints and assessments to help her fellow ombudsmen. She is a tremendous asset to the program.

Fernando Serrado – South Dade Office

Fernando has a long volunteer history with the South Dade Office and joined on March 19, 2004 because he felt that he could make a difference by advocating for the elderly population residing in Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs) and nursing homes. He wasted no time with beginning field work, assessments and follow-ups after becoming certified. Fernando is passionate about residents' rights and safety - it is important to him that residents feel comfortable at their new homes. Fernando should be commended for his compassion, his hard work, and his determination.

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Joanna Emerson – North Central Office

Since she joined the program, Joanna has been an active participant and critical member of our ombudsman council. She does not falter to do what she puts her mind to do. In

addition to assessments, visits, training new ombudsmen, and mentoring, Joanna has completed over 200 cases with more than 1,800 hours logged.

She was a recipient of the statewide Golden Choices Award on several occasions. She was also nominated for local council Ombudsman of the Year 2010. She has represented the North Central District at the State Council quarterly meetings and served on the State Advocacy and Legislative committees. She has served as Council Chair and Vice Chair, and was the District Trainer for training new volunteers.

In addition to her tireless commitment to the program, she also is a founding member of Concerned Citizens for Older Americans in Alachua County. In 2013, she was awarded the "Advocacy Award for CCOA" and continues to be a strong and passionate member of that organization.

Kathleen Vermette – East Central Office

Kathleen, also known as Kay, joined the program in 2002 and has been a relentless advocate for the residents in long-term care facilities. Her experience as a retired nurse provides an exceptional level of expertise when assessing issues related to the medical treatment the residents receive. She is well respected among the facility residents and administration. Kay has served in various roles on the East Central Florida Council, including mentor and Council Chair. Mr. Charles Sloan, the Council Chair, stated that one of Kay's most memorable quotes was, "To gain a resident's trust in order to advocate of their behalf would require sincerity and perseverance. We needed to be mindful of the fact that this is their home and promise to resolve their concerns with dignity and respect."

Ruth Battle-Hall – East Central Office

Ruth joined the program in 1998 and is held in high regard by facility residents, facility administrators, and her fellow members of the council. She is described as "consistently faithful" and her performance always exceeds the expectations of program staff. Ruth uses her training as a registered nurse to provide an exceptional level of advocacy for those who are in long-term care facilities. Ruth is an asset to the program and her tireless efforts are greatly appreciated.



ATTA-BOY

"I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to Ms. Nancy King, Legal Assistant with the LTCOP. She has been very supportive with a complaint that I filed regarding my father's care. She took the time to listen and was kind. I have been guided and educated by her." ~ Ms. Fazio, Delray Beach

"I am a relatively new ombudsman and wanted to say how impressed I am with not only the Program, but also District Ombudsman Manager Barbara Pohl and Rita Lavorgna. The work they do on behalf of Florida's seniors is outstanding. These exemplary individuals demonstrate passion, performance, and professionalism that is exceptional in all my previous experience." ~ Mr. Kennedy, Sarasota

"I would like to thank the Ombudsman Program for acting so promptly on a complaint I filed on December 15. I am grateful for your office looking into my grandmother's care so quickly. I believe the changes that have been made will benefit not only her, but all of the residents where she resides." ~ Ms. Cotita

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

Marie Brand



Withlacoochee District Office recently celebrated Mrs. Marie Brand's 10 years of service with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP). Marie has held various positions during her tenure, including District Chair, District Trainer, and a leading member of a Quality Assurance Team. In 2007 Marie was the "Golden Choices Volunteer Aware Recipient" and was chosen because of her work to improve the quality of life for Floridian seniors.

Marie has received several letters of appreciation from family members thanking her for her advocacy on their behalf. She is very passionate in her role as an ombudsman and assuring the residents that their voices are heard and their rights are respected.

She is committed to her work as a volunteer and not only completes her own assignments, but is always available to take additional cases, do extra assessments, and visits and help her fellow ombudsmen.

Thank you Marie for your many years of service for the residents of long-term care facilities and to the LTCOP!

(Photo showing Mrs. Brand on the right, being presented certificate of appreciation from State Ombudsman by District Manager)

HONOR FLIGHTS

Terre Anne Lindstamer
South Central District Ombudsman Manager

Honor Flights is a national organization that was formed to have as many WWII veterans as possible travel to Washington, D.C. to visit their memorial and others. With so many WWII veterans passing away each year, there is a sense of urgency with this project. This trip is accomplished at no cost to a veteran and each is escorted by a guardian. My husband, Bryan, and I were recently blessed to volunteer as guardians for Honor Flight 19 out of Lakeland Linder Airport.

The veteran I escorted was a WWII veteran and my husband's was a Korean War veteran who just happens to live in one of our local long-term care facilities. The administrator of this facility was also on the flight as a guardian, as were seven residents.

The best part of the one-day trip was witnessing everyday people paying their respect and appreciation to the veterans. Everywhere we went - the airports, the various sights in Washington D.C., the enormous "Welcome Home" celebration - people, young and old,



would thank our veterans for their service and sacrifice. I learned a lot about honor that day and came away with a new spirit of hope for our nation.

The volunteer staff of the Honor Flight organization did an excellent job of organizing the trip and, most importantly, modeling respect and dignity for our elder veterans. The oldest member of our flight was 99 years old. It was a day to remember!

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Ombudsman Karen Hardin. Ms. Hardin passed away on Wednesday, November 12, 2014. She advocated for residents in Polk County for nearly eight years and at the same time, was a Guardian ad Litem volunteer. Karen continually inspired others. After the premature death of her beloved husband, she attended Florida Southern College and graduated at age 41, taught kindergarten for 24 years, and attended as many continuing education events as she could in order share current information with residents. Karen always went above and beyond when advocating for residents, which she quietly and humbly considered her service to God. Karen adored her friends and family and always looked for opportunities to encourage, assist, and show kindness to everyone she met. We extend our deepest sympathies to her friends and family.

SUMMARY OF TOP COMPLAINTS

Under State law, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is responsible for publishing its complaint data each quarter. The following data reflects verified complaints from cases closed between October 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014. The data also shows the number of these complaints resolved.

Complaint Data Terms:

Verified: It is determined after work (interviews, record inspection, observation, etc.), that the circumstances described in the complaint are generally accurate.

Not Verified: It is determined after work (interviews, record inspection, observation, etc.), that the circumstances described in the complaint are not generally accurate. Verification is determined by the ombudsman.

Resolved: The complaint was addressed to the satisfaction of the resident. Resolved is one of several disposition codes used by the program. Resolution is determined by the resident.

To find out more about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program's complaint or facility assessment data, call toll-free 1-888-831-0404, and ask to be transferred to a representative in your area. All services are free and confidential.

Quarter 1 *(October 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014)*

Top 5 complaints accepted in Nursing Homes

	#Complaints	#Verified	#Not Verified	#Resolved
Dignity, respect - staff attitudes (0403)	66	43	23	44
Discharge/Eviction (0304)	46	30	16	30
Personal hygiene (includes oral hygiene) (0606)	43	27	16	26
Medications - administration, organization (0605)	41	22	19	20
Failure to respond to requests for assistance (0602)	38	31	7	30

Top 5 complaints accepted in ALF and AFCH

	#Complaints	#Verified	#Not Verified	#Resolved
Menu (1003)	68	40	28	41
Medications - administration, organization (0605)	53	33	20	35
Dignity, respect - staff attitudes (0403)	47	26	21	26
Equipment/Buildings (1103)	45	30	15	31
Cleanliness, pests, general housekeeping (1102)	42	24	18	27

STATEWIDE STATISTICS

Quarter 1 October 1 - December 31, 2014

Number of Beds	172,829
Number of Volunteer Ombudsmen	306
Facility Assessments	951
Facility Visitations	392
Complaint Investigations	1,623

*Reflects both initiation and closure dates that may overlap quarterly reporting periods.

