



Contact Jordan N. Cress Morrison
Telephone 850-414-2332
Email morrisonj@elderaffairs.org
Website Ombudsman.myflorida.com

FLORIDA LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM TO REMAIN OPERATIONAL AMID COVID-19 OUTBREAK

TALLAHASSEE, FL – In accordance with guidelines released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on March 13, 2020, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program will begin limiting its visits to long-term care facilities, effective immediately. CMS guidelines state that while residents retain the right to access the Ombudsman program, physical access should be restricted, with exceptions to be made only for compassionate care or end-of-life situations.

Additionally, Governor DeSantis' March 15, 2020 emergency declaration ordered Jared Moskowitz, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, to expand his emergency order to prohibit all visitation to nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult family care homes, long-term care facilities and adult group homes for the next 30 days. The order exempts Long-Term Care Ombudsmen Program representatives, provided they pass the screening test established by the declaration.

In response to these directives, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program will be implementing adjustments in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our ombudsmen and the residents we serve. The program will temporarily suspend the completion of required annual assessments, as well as in-person quarterly visits, which will be rescheduled once it has been deemed safe to do so. To ensure residents' continued access to the Ombudsman program, all active and open cases, as well as any new cases, will be managed via telephone, fax, and email communication.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program recognizes that this is a rapidly evolving situation and will provide updated guidance as deemed necessary by government and public health officials.

###

The Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, administratively housed at the Department of Elder Affairs, seeks to improve the quality of life and care for all Florida long-term care residents. Learn more at ombudsman.myflorida.com or by calling 1-888-831-0404. Like us on Facebook.

The Department of Elder Affairs fully supports the authority of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to independently advocate for the health, safety, welfare, and rights of long-term care residents. Consequently, the views and opinions expressed by the Office may not represent the official policy or position of the Department of Elder Affairs or its employees.