



STATE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN COUNCIL MINUTES
March 3, 2021

Ombudsman Program Representatives			
Sully Sullivan, Northwest	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Irene Dion, West Central	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
Marshall Kapp, Panhandle	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vana Prewitt, Southwest	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sharon Lauter, North Central	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donna Holden, South Central	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marie Brand, State Chair, Withlacoochee	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Margaret Riccardi, Palm Beach	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vella Sillah-Williams, First Coast	Present <input type="checkbox"/>	Valerie Nubi-Collins, Treasure Coast	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Diane Mongelli, First Coast South	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kashar Shazad, Broward	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tim O'Keefe, East Central	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	North Dade	Present <input type="checkbox"/>
Phil Weddle, Brevard	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cristina Clark, S Dade & FI Keys	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Carol Weideman, Mid & South Pinellas	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Choice Edwards, At-Large Member	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jane Spencer, Pasco & North Pinellas	Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mary Darling, At-Large Member	Present <input type="checkbox"/>

Guests	
Mike Phillips – State Ombudsman Lynn Hearn, Legal Advocate York Shuler, Data Analyst Betsy McAllister, State Training Administrator Joe Considine, Operations Analyst II Terre Anne Lindstamer, South Central Ombudsman Manager Samantha Kotz, South Central Ombudsman Assistant	Bob Cochrane, East Central Ombudsman Manager Lynn Penley, West Central Ombudsman Manager Lori Berndt, North Region Ombudsman Manager Annette Perry, West Region Ombudsman Manager Jo Ann Quiles, East Region Ombudsman Manager Kim Wiedeman, Northwest Ombudsman Manager Lisa Dale, First Coast South Ombudsman Manager Tracie Rayfield, First Coast Ombudsman Manager

State Chair

- Open Session was called to order at 10:00 AM

Approval of Minutes

- Motion: Marshall Kapp motioned to accept the Council meeting minutes of December 4, 2020. Christina Clark seconded.

Chair Introduction

- Chair Brand gave a brief overview of her background including her previous work as a nurse and her 16+ years as an ombudsman. She is looking forward to being the chair.
- Marshall Kapp has agreed to be Vice Chair.

Central Office Report

- Advertisements - We have had 7,000-plus advertisements out on TV and radio in several targeted areas. They will play through June. We paid \$275,000 for approximately \$1.1 million in ads.

- Volunteers - The program currently has 208 certified Ombudsman with 21 in training. Those in training are of similar age to existing volunteers. We have been losing Ombudsman for personal as well as health related reasons.
- Return to Facilities – With positivity rates going down and vaccines becoming more readily available, the program is moving steadily back towards normalcy. 90% or more of residents have taken or been offered a vaccine for Covid-19. The staff rate of vaccination is 45%-50%. We are not pressuring any ombudsman to go back into facilities.
- Resident Activity Booklet – This was well received. We have plans to make future versions more interactive and thought provoking, and also aim to have a way for the residents to correspond with the program.
- Resident Councils - Mike asked council members to collect contact information for resident council presidents for future communications. He discussed plans to start a newsletter for resident councils and requested input.
- Legal Advocate - Mike introduced Lynn Hearn, LTCOP's new Legal Advocate. Lynn described her background and work experience.
- Legislative Issues - There are two bills being proposed that are of interest to LTCOP:
 - Senate bill 74/ House bill 7005. These essentially offer facilities immunity from suit for actions taken during the Covid-19 pandemic. The facility would only be liable if it were found to be grossly negligent, which requires proving it knew its actions would cause harm. The statute of limitations would be shortened to 1 year. The LTCOP opposes these bills because immunity is not warranted when we know that even before Covid-19 not all facilities were acting correctly.
 - Senate bill 1132/ House Bill 485, which is about a new class of nursing employees, Personal Care Attendants. PCA's are only provided 8 hours' worth of training on 10 different areas, PCA's can only work for 4 months without becoming certified or taking another position. This was created on a temporary basis to help facilities bridge the gap in staffing needs. Now the push is to make these positions permanent. The LTCOP opposes these bills because PCA's dilute the quality of care for residents in facilities. Try to pay attention to PCAs going forward when advocating.
 - Mike and Lynn are meeting with the bill sponsors and preparing talking points which will be distributed. If speaking as ombudsmen, speakers must stick to the program's talking points. Ombudsmen may take a different position, but only in their personal capacity and not as a representative of the program.
 - There were several questions and some additional discussion regarding the PCA bills and who can conduct legislative advocacy.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Advocacy Committee:

- Jane Spencer reported a committee meeting was held on 2/25/2021. There was a quorum.
- There are no projects right now. No one at the meeting had gone back into any facility. The committee still has concerns over PNAs.
- A question was raised about the PPE required for entering facilities. Mike stated the ombudsmen must follow the guidelines set by the program and by the facility.

Recruitment, Retention & Recognition Committee:

- Choice Edwards reported this committee met on 2/24/2021.

- The advertising blitz, Presidential volunteer service awards and volunteer appreciation gifts were discussed.
- Volunteer appreciation gifts discussed include a portable charging bank, a chair, and a cooler for drinks. The aim is for things the volunteers would use day-to-day.
- Choice reiterated that we need to increase the number of volunteers. We also need more people on the committee. Open to new projects.

Training Committee:

- Margaret Riccardi reported the committee met on 2/18/2021.
- Wanda Harrison's term has ended so the committee voted Margaret Riccardi as the new committee chair.
- The State Trainer updated the committee on the eight online certification modules which have been fully revised and will be published soon.
- The classroom training will be the next task to revise the Complaint Investigations & Resolution along with the Administrative Assessments, Residents Visits & Consultations.
- The NORC – Ombudsman Program Training Needs and NORC evaluation survey was sent to the DOMS.
- Clarification was made about the process to get certified while not being able to go in facilities due to Covid. The Administrative Assessment Virtual training is a 4-Step process and even if a volunteer gets certified during the pandemic the final step is to send the volunteer out with a mentor or seasoned ombudsman to complete an Assessment in order to complete the certification process.

Data and Information Committee:

- There was not a meeting this quarter.

Questions posed by the various councils for discussion:

- Can ombudsmen use Google voice when calling the facilities? Mike Phillips stated he had concerns about this and prefers the use of caller-id blocking or use of the district office phone. But if an ombudsman want to use Google voice on his or her own they are free to do so.
- How are other councils keeping their ombudsman motivated and connected? Council members shared their experiences; one district has virtual meetings every 4-6 weeks, one sends out emails to keep everyone informed; one holds meetings when there are items to be picked up for the facilities.

Public Comment:

- No public comment.

Next Meeting:

- The next meeting is currently scheduled for June 2, 2021.

Adjournment:

- Motion to adjourn made by Choice Edwards. Seconded by Margaret Riccardi. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am.