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DEPARTMENT OF AGING

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program FACT SHEET July 2015

Authority: Annotated Code of Maryland, Title 10 – Human Services – Sections 212-214 Older Americans Act, including the requirements of 42 U.S.C. § 3058G

Protecting the rights and promoting the well-being of residents of long-term care facilities

The Ombudsman Program serves 47,000+ people in 231 Nursing Homes and 1514 Assisted Living Facilities through:

- The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at the Maryland Department of Aging with a State Ombudsman and Ombudsman Specialist
- 19 Local Programs (36 FTEs) located in Area Agencies on Aging
- 155 volunteers contributing \$548,093 worth of time (94 certified)

In FY14, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program provided:

- 11000+ Facility visits
- 10552 Consultations to individuals
- 326 Community Ed. Sessions
- 579 Meetings with resident councils
- 2958 Complaints addressed
- 5390 Consultations to facilities
- 158 Meetings with family councils
- 262 Participation in Nursing Home surveys

Sources of complaints:

- Residents – 37%
- Relative/Friend – 35%
- Other – Non relative guardian, bankers, clergy, public officials, other agencies
- Anonymous – 12%
- Facility /Staff – 6%

Most frequent complaints handled in Nursing Homes:

1. Discharge/eviction – planning, notice, procedures, abandonment
2. Care Plan/resident assessment – inadequate, failure to follow plan or physician's orders
3. Failure to respond to requests for assistance – call bells, etc.
4. Medications – administration , organization
5. Personal Hygiene – includes nail care and oral hygiene, dressing and grooming
6. Dignity, respect – staff attitudes
7. Accidents or injury of unknown origin – falls, improper handling, etc.
8. Therapies – physical, occupational, speech
9. Symptoms unattended, including pain
10. Personal property – stolen, lost

Most frequent complaints handled in Assisted Living Facilities:

1. Discharge/ Eviction Discharge/eviction – planning, notice, procedures, abandonment
2. Food service – quantity, quality, variation, choice, condiments, utensils, menu
3. Medications- administration, organization
4. Dignity, respect – staff attitudes
5. Physical Abuse
6. Equipment/building – disrepair, hazard, poor lighting, fire safety, not secure
7. Failure to respond to requests for assistance
8. Care Planning
9. Personal Hygiene
10. Resident Conflict and Shortage of staff

Program Information:

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is guided by federal and state laws that create a program of individual and systemic advocacy for those who live in nursing homes and assisted living.

The Ombudsman Program works throughout the state and country to protect the rights and promote the well being of residents who are oftentimes medically fragile, vulnerable and isolated (40% have no regular visits by family or friends).

Starting in 2014, all employed and volunteer ombudsmen who work with residents must be certified by the Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman. The volunteer program increased from 98 in 2010 to 155 in 2014.

Volunteers are well trained and well equipped to serve as ombudsmen. To be certified, they must complete a minimum of 20 hours orientation, be mentored by an experienced ombudsman to conduct facility visits, and receive additional training to resolve complaints.

Ombudsman Programs throughout the state respond to grievances with the goal to resolve them at the lowest possible level based on the wishes/needs of the resident. They are guided by the resident/legal representative in their actions. Ombudsmen seek to empower residents, their family members and legal representatives to better understand the long term care system and address their needs using a variety of strategies. Ombudsmen may act with or on behalf of residents.

Confidentiality is central to ombudsman work. No names or identifying information are released without permission.

Ombudsmen are proactive, working to prevent neglect/abuse and promote residents' rights. They provide staff training, educational forums, work with resident and family councils, and are involved in local, county and statewide discussions that address policies related to long term care.

State Ombudsman Goals:

- 1) Provide the resources needed to ensure that the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is operated consistently with Older American's Act provisions and operating consistently within and between the local ombudsman programs.
- 2) Advocate with and on behalf of Maryland residents who live in long-term care facilities.
- 3) Promote quality of care and quality of life for residents including those with dementia through training, consultations, highlighting successful practices, and public policies that support person-centered care.

This Fact Sheet summarizes the FY14 (October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014) data submitted to the Administration for Community Living. For more information contact Alice H. Hedt, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, alice.hedt@maryland.gov, 1-800-243-3425 (toll free in Maryland) or 410-767-1100