



STATE OF WISCONSIN
BOARD ON AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

Post Office Box 514
Two Rivers, WI 54241-0514
(920) 793-2132
Fax (920) 793-2135
Ombudsman Helpline 1-800 815-0015
<http://longtermcare.wi.gov>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Eva Arnold
Patricia A. Finder-Stone
Terry Lynch
Tanya L. Meyer
James Surprise
Dale B. Taylor
Barbara Thoni

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Heather A. Bruemmer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

20 Jan 2010
Contact: Long Term Care
Ombudsman Program
(800) 815.0015

Resolving Concerns in Long Term Care

Every person who lives in a long term care facility should have the best quality of care and best quality of life possible. It requires good communication with the facility, the resident and the resident's family to achieve this outcome. Sometimes, in spite of good intentions on the part of everyone, problems arise. The following are a list of suggestions to help resolve concerns in long term care:

- **Share information about the resident's life and history.** Provide the facility with information about your preferences, patterns of life and so on. Many problems can be avoided by keeping life in the nursing home as much like life at home as possible.
- **Make an inventory of personal items.** Keeping an inventory is an excellent way of keeping track of your belongings. Make sure to update it every few months. Additionally, you might want to consider purchasing renter's insurance for replacement of lost or misplaced items.
- **Communicate.** Don't assume that everyone knows that you have a problem. Speak up to the staff person you feel comfortable talking to. Let them know your concern and find out from them who are the people that can help fix the problem.
- **Address problems as they arise.** Little issues can become big problems if not addressed immediately. You might expect problems will arise during your stay at the home, but don't wait until you are so frustrated that communication becomes impossible.
- **Focus.** Try to address one concern at a time. Addressing several at once can feel overwhelming for everyone. Consider keeping a diary with information about exactly what is or is not happening and why you think it is an issue.
- **Compliment good care.** While some times it's easier to bring up the bad things, it's also good to let staff know when they are doing something good. It may help you down the road when you do need to share a concern.

If you have a concern, view it as your opportunity to share information, and to state your perception of how things are going at the home. When making a concern known to facility staff, it's important to remain calm, cool and collected. If you appear rational, your concern will be perceived as rational. If you are hollering, screaming, or carrying on, the facility staff will most likely see your behavior and anger, and not hear your concerns.

* * * more * * *

After you have made your concern known, ask facility staff to investigate your concern. Provide as many details as possible when making your concern known, such as who, what, where, when, why and how. This will help facility staff investigate the concern thoroughly. Remember to ask the facility to respond to your concern, either verbally or in writing. You may also want to offer suggestions on how to resolve the problem, this will help build teamwork and keep the lines of communication open.

The Ombudsman Program encourages you to work with the facility first, however, you have the right to contact the Ombudsman for assistance at any time. If you would like to contact your local Ombudsman, he/she can be reached at 1-800-815-0015.

*By: Amy Panosh
Regional Ombudsman*