



STATE OF WISCONSIN
BOARD ON AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

1402 Pankratz Street, Suite 111
Madison, WI 53704-4001
(608) 246-7013
Ombudsman Program (800) 815-0015
Medigap Helpline (800) 242-1060
Fax (608) 246-7001
<http://longtermcare.state.wi.us>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

28 July 2009
CONTACT: Volunteer
Ombudsman Program
1 (800) 815-0015

Help Wanted: Volunteers with a passion to advocate for nursing home residents.

No previous experience necessary. No specialized degree required. Training given by skilled personnel. Continuing education in geriatric issues provided. Must enjoy problem solving and interpersonal relationships. Common sense is necessary. No salary offered, but great personal benefits can be expected. Please call 1-800-815-0015 for more information about the State of Wisconsin Volunteer Ombudsman Program.

Unfortunately you won't find this ad in the help wanted section of your local newspaper. Instead, you will find the Board on Aging and Long Term Care Volunteer Coordinators diligently working to recruit individuals through their local networking resources. As advocates for Wisconsin's long term care consumers, the Volunteer Ombudsman Program provides an opportunity to serve senior citizens in long term care facilities in targeted counties. Volunteer Ombudsmen assist long term care residents with concerns regarding issues or problems involved in their activities of daily life. As advocates, Volunteer Ombudsmen, first and foremost, empower residents to articulate their concerns. If residents are unable to speak for themselves, the volunteer will speak on their behalf with the resident's permission.

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program was created in 1994 to augment the existing Regional Professional Ombudsman Program. Together, these complementary programs advocate for Wisconsin's senior citizens living in long term care facilities. In its beginning, the Volunteer Ombudsman Program concentrated its resources in major metropolitan areas of Wisconsin. Since that time, the need for more advocates has pushed the program into smaller cities and rural areas around the State. During the agency's largest expansion in 2008, the Volunteer Ombudsman Program added 20 counties across Wisconsin to its service area, bringing the total area currently covered to 31 counties.

Nursing home residents look forward to their volunteer's visits as a friendly face and listening ear. Volunteers of the ombudsman program can attest to the important and meaningful work that is accomplished each time they make a visit. Volunteer Ombudsmen listen, serve and support nursing home residents.

There are never enough volunteers to visit every facility and speak to each and every resident in Wisconsin's nursing homes. We need more volunteers willing to make weekly visits to nursing home residents. There is a saying that goes, "Those that can, do: those that can do more, volunteer". If you would like to volunteer and make a difference to Wisconsin's long term care population please call 1-800-815-0015 or visit our website at <http://longtermcare.state.wi.us>.

By: *Cindy Freitag*
Volunteer Ombudsman Coordinator