



ALASKA
LONG TERM CARE
OMBUDSMAN

MISSION OF THE LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

Established by the Older Americans Act, the Long Term Care Ombudsman program is federal and state mandated to provide independent oversight and advocacy services to residents in Alaska's long term care facilities (nursing homes and assisted living homes). The Long Term Care Ombudsman program is a resident centered advocacy program designed to protect the rights, health, safety, and welfare of Alaskans living in long term care facilities. In Alaska, the Long Term Care Ombudsman program also provides advocacy to seniors living independently with complaints about their residential circumstances.

"I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for all your help and guidance. It was a stressful few days there, and you were truly a lifeline."

—From Resident in Cordova

ALASKA LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

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ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2015 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2016



MESSAGE FROM THE STATE LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

Friends and Family,

As Long Term Care Ombudsmen for Alaska, our mission is to meet with residents of assisted living homes and nursing facilities to resolve any issues they identify. An important part of this process is to make sure residents and their families know there is a Long Term Care Ombudsman to help them when they need it. When I tell people I am the State Long Term Care Ombudsman, they are often unsure of the role of an ombudsman. We have worked hard these past two years to solve this identity problem.

We decided to assign Long Term Care Ombudsmen to specific regions of the state so that residents, family members and facility staff would be able to build a relationship with their Ombudsman. This has increased the number of complaints that come to us directly. Ombudsmen now know each facility better and are able to match individuals looking for placements with a facility that meets their specific needs.

We have also increased the number of visits to long term care facilities that serve seniors. Now residents know us well enough to trust us to resolve their issues. This increase in visits has begun to decrease the number of issues in some facilities, as they know Ombudsmen are continually monitoring the care residents receive.

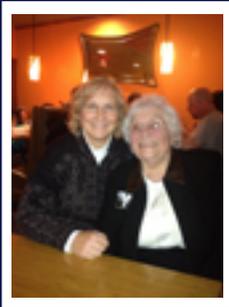
A large part of our ability to increase visits to facilities is a result of the increase in the number of Ombudsman volunteers. Last year we doubled the number of volunteers in our program. In this difficult fiscal

climate, the only way to increase Ombudsman services to individuals living in long term care facilities is to grow our volunteer base.

Do you have three hours a month to visit with residents as a Long Term Care Ombudsman?

Respectfully,

Teresa Holt



FY 2016 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Increased the number of visits to facilities from 434 to 740
- Resolved 95% of 662 complaints to the satisfaction of the senior
- Increased the number of volunteers from 16 to 33, who completed 199 facility visits
- Provided consultations to 399 individuals and 153 facilities
- Presented to 39 different groups on the LTCO and resident rights

Top five complaints to the Long Term Care Ombudsman:

1. Issues of involuntary discharge
2. Issues with food (quality, quantity, choice)
3. Need for legal assistance (guardianship, conservator, POA, wills)
4. Being treated with dignity and respect
5. Incorrect administration of medication

"I don't know what I would have done without your help! I was not able to figure out this complicated situation without your assistance."

— Family member from Fairbanks

NEEDED SYSTEMS CHANGES

- Work with the Department of Health and Social Services to create a sustainable plan to serve the growing number of seniors in Alaska
- Increase Alaska's ability to provide quality care for individuals with dementia and keep them out of Alaska Psychiatric Institute
- Support the department's changes to improve the quality of care provided in assisted living homes by revising ALH regulations to include designated levels of care, increased training requirements, and reform the rates to match level of care provided
- Ensure seniors who live in long term care facilities have the opportunity to vote