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**ADVOCACY. ACTION.
ANSWERS ON AGING.**

LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



The Area Agency on Aging is a service of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, a regional planning organization which serves 28 local governments in a four-county area of western North Carolina. Members include Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties and the 24 cities and towns within those counties.

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Western Piedmont
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Area Agency on Aging



WWW.WPCOGAAA.ORG

**Advocate for the Rights of
Residents in Long-Term Care**



What is an Ombudsman?

Ombudsman is a Swedish term that means “citizen advocate.”

A long-term care **Ombudsman** is an advocate for resident’s rights and is responsible for investigating complaints raised by, or on behalf of, nursing home and adult care home residents.

Ombudsmen work with residents, family members, concerned citizens and facilities, as well as public and private agencies, to ensure quality of life and compliance with standards of care for residents in long-term care facilities.

Ombudsman Services are provided at no cost and are confidential. Learn more at www.wpcogaaa.org. Call 828.485.4213.

What does a Long-Term Care Ombudsman do?

An Ombudsman . . .

- **Advocates** for residents when their rights have been violated or receiving improper care.
- **Investigates** complaints as they relate to residents’ rights, services and benefits.
- **Mediates** disputes between long-term care residents and facilities or agencies.
- **Provides** information to residents, family and staff about residents’ rights, care planning, placement / transfer / discharge, family and resident councils.
- **Educates** the public on long-term care issues and elder abuse awareness.
- **Promotes** involvement by the community in long-term care facilities.

What are Community Advisory Committees?

The Ombudsman works in conjunction with nursing home and adult care home Community Advisory Committees in each county to serve residents in long-term care facilities and help uphold the spirit of the nursing home and adult care home Residents’ Bill of Rights.

The Committees are made up of volunteers, appointed by the County Commissioners, who visit facilities, interact with residents, and advocate for quality care. Members must reside within the county in which they serve.

If you are interested in volunteering to serve on a Community Advisory Committee in your county, please contact the Ombudsman Program by calling 828.485.4213.

Who May Need an Ombudsman?

- Residents, family, friends, and staff of long-term care facilities.
- Government agencies.
- Anyone seeking information and education regarding long-term care or placement issues.

What to do before calling the Ombudsman:

- Be prepared. Have your concerns written down to help you be more effective and ask the right questions.
- Keep records. Remember to record dates, times and people you spoke with regarding your concerns.
- Be pleasant. Getting angry or rude never helps to solve the problem.
- Utilize the facility complaint or grievance process. Try to solve complaints through the facility first.