

What is the ABLE Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program?

Improving the quality of life and quality of care for consumers of long-term care is the mission of Advocates for Basic Legal Equality's (ABLE's) Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. This program is part of a statewide network of programs that act to protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of long-term care residents and consumers by investigating and resolving complaints, promoting the enforcement of laws and regulations, advising and recommending policy, and educating the public, consumers, providers and policy makers.

Consumers of long-term care include those who:

- Live in nursing homes;
- Live in Residential Care Facilities;
- Live in Adult Care Facilities; or
- Receive community-based services such as home health nursing or transportation.

We Can Help

If anyone talks to you about discharge, contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at:

(800) 542-1874

Consumer Rights Regarding Involuntary Discharge

Involuntary discharge from a facility is among the most common issues confronting residents and their families. The goal of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is to work toward resolution and ensure all avenues have been explored in an effort to prevent involuntary discharges.

It is against Ohio law to discharge a consumer from a facility against their will unless...

- The resident's health has improved sufficiently to allow for discharge or transfer to a less skilled level of care;
- The resident has resided in the home fewer than thirty days;
- An emergency arises in which the health or safety of others in the home is/would be endangered;
- An emergency arises in which the resident's urgent medical needs require an immediate transfer or discharge; or
- Failure to pay for services after reasonable and appropriate notice.

Consumers have the right:

- To receive notice of discharge, even in emergencies;
- To receive written notice at least 30 days in advance of involuntary discharge.

Interested in Becoming a Long-Term Care Ombudsman?

Volunteers are essential to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. As a volunteer, you will receive training, certification, and continuing education opportunities. Volunteers are required to participate in several training sessions before becoming an Ombudsman. Volunteers carry out several duties, including:

- Informing residents and families of their rights;
- Working to resolve uncomplicated complaints;
- Providing community contact for residents; and
- Working to empower residents and families to advocate for themselves.

Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a service of:

ABLE ADVOCATES
FOR BASIC LEGAL
EQUALITY, INC.

525 Jefferson Ave. Suite 300
Toledo, OH 43604

ombudsman.ablelaw.org

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Advocating for Quality Care

For all consumers of long-term care services



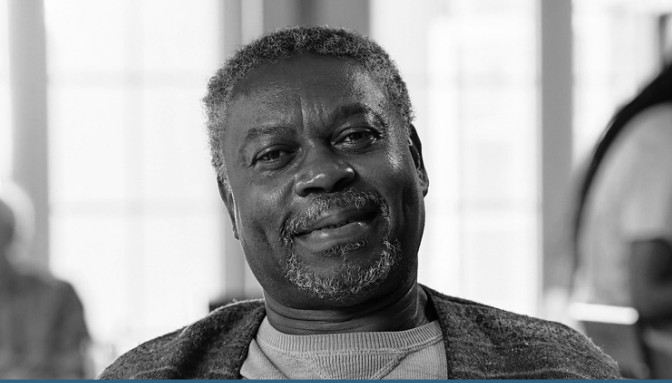
**Long-Term Care
Ombudsman**

Advocates for Excellence in Your Care

ABLE ADVOCATES
FOR BASIC LEGAL
EQUALITY, INC.

Call for assistance:

**(419) 259-2891
(800) 542-1874**



How does the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program work?

The ABLE Long-Term Ombudsman Program serves 10 northwest Ohio counties, including Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Sandusky, Williams, and Wood.

Staff members are certified by the Ohio Department of Aging, and have professional backgrounds in gerontology, social work, and health care. They respond to, investigate, and resolve complaints ranging from unappetizing food and inadequate hygiene to violations of civil rights, abuse, neglect, admission and discharge problems. ABLE's Long-Term Care Ombudsmen also help resolve concerns regarding billing and access to services.

Ombudsmen work with the consumer, family members, or other representatives and long-term care providers to resolve problems and concerns about quality of care and quality of life. This program is offered free of charge. Donations are always welcome.

In addition to complaint resolution, Ombudsman Program staff also provide:

- Information about selecting a nursing home or adult care facility;
- Information relating to Medicaid and Medicare, as well as other state and federal programs affecting long-term care services; and
- A complete list of resident rights as mandated by Ohio legislation.

Ombudsmen are available to educate the community by speaking with groups regarding long-term care issues. They also monitor and support laws affecting older persons.



How do I use the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program if I have a concern?

If possible, you should first address concerns with your provider. Often, this is the first step toward resolving a problem; however, there is no requirement to speak with another agency or your provider before contacting an Ombudsman.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman will respond to your concerns and work to investigate and resolve the complaint, acting only at your direction and consent. You control the complaint process and determine the extent to which the Long-Term Care Ombudsman becomes involved in solving the problem. This program is free, confidential, and you are involved throughout all phases of the resolution process.

If necessary, the Ombudsman can handle the complaint without disclosing your identity. Even if the Ombudsman cannot resolve the complaint without revealing your identity, you make the choice as to whether to proceed.

Actions are taken only after being authorized by you and/or your family members. Additionally, the Ombudsman will conduct follow-up with the care provider to ensure that any agreement reached to resolve the complaint is carried out and remains in effect.

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When a consumer cannot speak for him or herself, the Ombudsman will assist the consumer's legal representative, family member, or sponsor on behalf of the consumer. The Ombudsman investigates to verify and document the complaint, after which the findings are shared with the consumer along with options for resolution.

To voice a concern or obtain information about long-term care, contact ABLE's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at:

(419) 259-2891

(800) 542-1874

Fax: (419) 259-2880

ombudsman.ablelaw.org

