



# The Role of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman



The mission of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of individuals residing in long-term care by investigating complaints, seeking resolutions to problems and providing advocacy, with the goal of enhancing quality of life and care.

In Iowa, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is charged with advocating for the rights and wishes of residents and tenants who live in nursing homes, assisted living programs, residential care facilities and elder group homes. All services provided are confidential and free of charge.

To contact the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, call 866.236.1430 or visit [www.iowaaging.gov](http://www.iowaaging.gov).

## WHICH INDIVIDUALS ARE SERVED BY LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMEN?

In Iowa, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OSLTCO) serves individuals residing in long-term care facilities, including nursing facilities, residential care facilities, assisted living programs and elder group homes. The jurisdiction of the OSLTCO is set forth in the federal Nursing Home Reform Law of 1987 and is further outlined through state law.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMEN?

The OSLTCO works to advocate for the rights and wishes of residents and tenants of Iowa's long-term care facilities. These rights include, but are not limited to:

- Being treated with respect and dignity;
- Expecting privacy and confidentiality;
- Participating in the care planning process and making decisions about treatment;
- Making personal choices (e.g., when to go to bed, when to get up and what to eat);
- Visiting with others;
- Enjoying individual interests;
- Expressing concerns without fear of reprisal;
- Being fully informed about services and costs; and
- Being free from chemical and physical restraints, abuse, discrimination and neglect.

## WHAT ELSE DO LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMEN DO?

In addition to advocating for the rights and wishes of residents and tenants of Iowa's long-term care facilities, the OSLTCO:

- Investigates complaints made by, or on behalf of, residents and tenants;
- Serves as a resource for answers regarding long-term care rules and rights;
- Provides information, education, awareness and training about long-term care options and residents' rights;
- Promotes policy changes to improve the quality of life for individuals in long-term care; and
- Trains Volunteer Ombudsmen to serve as the "eyes and ears" of residents of nursing facilities across the state by conducting monitoring visits to assigned locations.