

OFFICE OF THE STATE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

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2018 GEORGIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE MELANIE MCNEIL, ESQ., STATE OMBUDSMAN

The governor and law makers have received more than 1,100 signed letters and petitions from Nursing Home residents urging an appropriation to fully fund a \$20 increase in the Personal Needs Allowance (currently just \$50.00 a month). The increase was authorized in legislation that was passed last year by the General Assembly. Gov. Deal recommended an appropriation that would fund half of the \$20 increase. Ombudsman Representatives have worked with facilities and residents to facilitate the letter writing and petition signing campaign for full funding.



Pictured are the PNA letters and petitions signed by residents.



January 15th state offices including the SLTCO Office, are closed for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday.

Ombudsman Representative Candidates Certification Training

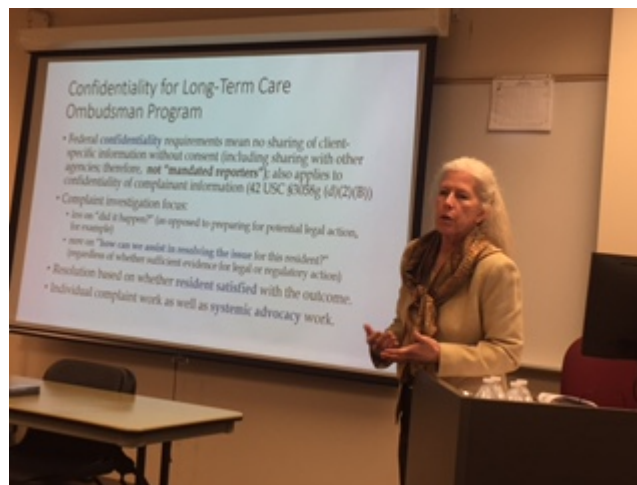
The Office of State Long Term Care Ombudsman conducted a certification training class from January 23rd to 25th for four candidates. Topics included the history and role of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, Basic Residents' Rights, Case Study Activity, Nursing Homes and Personal Care Homes including Assisted Living Communities Laws & Regulations, Complaint Processing and Complaint Investigation. In addition to classroom training, on-site

certification training was conducted from February 6th to 8th in Moultrie, GA nursing homes and personal care homes. See pictures below:



State Office

Melanie McNeil, Esq., State Ombudsman spoke on the topic “Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program – The Importance of Having An Independent Advocate to Help Individuals Receiving Long-Term Care Services” at the Kennesaw State University on January 9, 2018.



Washington Update

The federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) is seeking public input on proposed changes to the National Ombudsman Reporting System (NORS). Notice of the 30-day comment period was published in the Federal Register on February 23, 2018.

The proposed revisions are intended to:

- Reduce reporting burden on the States' Ombudsman Programs while obtaining needed annual performance measures;

- Improve usability of the data by incorporating some new items and removing others, based on recommendations of state Ombudsman programs and other stakeholders;
- Enhance ACL's ability to understand and report on Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) program operations, and the experience of long-term care facility residents; and
- Reflect changes in LTCO program operations and long-term supports and services policies, research, and practices.
- Comments must be submitted by March 26, 2018 via:
- Fax to 202-395-5806 (Attn: OMB Desk Officer for ACL)
- Email to OIRA submission@omb.eop.gov (Attn: OMB Desk Officer for ACL)
- Mail to The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, New Executive Office Bldg., 725 17th St. N.W., rm. 10235, Washington, DC 20503, (Attn: OMB Desk Officer for ACL).



Public Input | ACL Administration for Community Living

**Local Program Updates
South Ombudsman Program
Volunteer Visitors**

The SOWEGA Council on Aging/RSVP has sponsored this Nursing Home visitation program since 1975 (43 years of service). Since 1979, the current RSVP Project Director has been overseeing the program. These volunteers, who are assigned to the SOWEGA Council on Aging Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, serve as volunteer visitors in nursing homes and personal care homes. Many long-term care residents do not have family or friends to visit so these visitors are an essential part of their lives. The residents know that someone, independent of the home, will be there on a routine basis to spend time with them and listen to their concerns. The visitors are truly the lifelines to the community in which these residents lived before entering the long-term care setting! Pictured are the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Melanie McNeil and Jeff Taylor from the office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman during their site visit to the SOWEGA Council on Aging Long-Term Care Ombudsman program.



National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

The National Consumer Voice and the National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC) have created several new training materials on the topics of abuse, neglect, exploitation and misappropriation of property. For detailed information, visit http://theconsumervoice.org/issues/issue_details/proposed-revisions-to-the-federal-nursing-home-regulations#education-materials

GAO U.S. Government Accountability Office

"State Medicaid programs and CMS, the federal agency responsible for overseeing the state programs, share responsibility for ensuring that beneficiaries' health and welfare is protected. GAO was asked to examine state and federal oversight of assisted living services in Medicaid. This report (1) describes state spending on and coverage of these services, (2) describes how state Medicaid agencies oversee the health and welfare of beneficiaries in these settings, and (3) examines the extent that CMS oversees state Medicaid agency monitoring of assisted living services." For the report, visit <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-179>

Read These Things

- **U.S. Pays Billions for ‘Assisted Living,’ but What Does It Get?**
Federal investigators say they have found huge gaps in the regulation of assisted living facilities that take care of Medicaid Beneficiaries.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/03/us/politics/assisted-living-gaps.html>
- **Newsletter – Elder Justice: What “No Harm” Really Means for Residents**
The Center for Medicare Advocacy, a nonprofit, nonpartisan law organization that helps older people and people with disabilities obtain fair access to Medicare and quality health care.
<http://www.medicareadvocacy.org/newsletter-elder-justice-what-no-harm-really-means-for-residents/>
- **These Non-Drug Methods Could Help People with Alzheimer’s, Study Suggests**
There’s no drug to treat cognitive disease, but these alternatives may help
<http://time.com/5112698/alzheimer-non-drug-treatments/>
- **Music Helps People in Nursing Home Once Considered Unreachable**
A California nursing home is using music therapy with residents suffering from dementia.
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-music-can-help-those-suffering-from-dementia>
- **New Fact Sheet from Justice in Aging: Skilled Nursing Facilities and Other Creditors Acting as Representative Payees** <http://www.justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Skilled-Nursing-Facilities-and-Other-Creditors-Acting-As-Representative-Payees.pdf?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=e34c99d6-93ad-49b0-b636-9266436234f7>

