

# OFFICE OF THE STATE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

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## 2017 GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLYSINE DIE MELANIE MCNEIL, ESQ., STATE OMBUDSMAN

Beginning in January every year, the Georgia General Assembly meets to consider legislation and develop a budget for the state. This year legislation passed that authorizes an increase in the Personal Needs Allowance for Nursing Home Residents - SB 202. However, residents will not see the increase in the PNA until funds are appropriated. Other good news for long-term care residents is that legislation passed to allow dental hygienists to provide some services to nursing home residents without requiring a dentist to be on the premises – HB 154. A number of other bills affecting older adults were considered during the 2017 session. Please view the Georgia Council on Aging website at [www.gcoa.org](http://www.gcoa.org) or the Georgia General Assembly website at [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov) for more bills of interest. Despite advocacy efforts last fall and during the session, we were not successful in increasing funding for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. We will work on that for the next session and will discuss strategies and messaging at the June conference.

## West Region Ombudsman Program

West Region Ombudsman Representatives conducted six hours of volunteer training on April 4, 2017. At the end of the training, all volunteers were given a test which consisted of ten questions. All passed the exam. Now they are assigned to staff Ombudsman Representatives to complete 22 hours of on-site training. When the volunteers complete 28 hours training with a passing score, each will be certified and issued an ID name badge to wear when they visit facility residents.

## Volunteer Spotlight

Mr. Lorenzo Thomas attended the Associate Certified Volunteer Training on January 19, 2017 where he received six hours of classroom training. He began his field training shadowing Rebecca Folkes, Ombudsman Representative for the West region. Ms. Folkes trained him in nursing homes in Henry County. These homes are located in the area where Mr. Thomas lives. Mr. Thomas is very enthusiastic about his volunteering to serve residents in long-term-care facilities.



Mr. Thomas volunteered with the Florida Long-Term-Care Ombudsman Program prior to moving to Georgia. The Florida State Ombudsman in 2010 wrote, "Your tremendous dedication and hard work improved the quality of life and care for Florida's most frail and vulnerable population". Roberta Collins, Coordinator of the West Region said, "I too see the dedication that Mr. Thomas brings to the Georgia Volunteer Program." He attended a staff meeting on March 27, 2017 and was given his test to become an Associate Certified Volunteer. He completed his 22 hours of field training with Ms. Folkes and he learned more about submitting reports. Once Mr. Thomas was given his user ID for Ombudsmanager, he immediately tried to access the reporting program. Mr. Thomas was having problems with his operating system on his home desk top. Roberta said, "I suggested that he could just fax his reports to Rebecca or to me and not to worry about inputting his data into Ombudsmanager." He responded " I want to do all that is required of me as a volunteer." The next week he called Ms. Folkes and she assisted him with learning how to enter his visits. Mr. Thomas' "don't quit" attitude makes him an asset to the most fragile population that we serve. "The West Region is very proud to have Mr. Thomas apart of our team." *Roberta Collins, West Region Ombudsman Program*

## Upcoming WebEx Training

### Oral Health and Older Adults: What You Should Know

Friday, June 23, 2017 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm EST

**Description:** The mouth, as a part of the body, can impact the rest of the body and the overall well-being of an individual. Gum disease has been associated with various systemic diseases. Maintaining a healthy mouth can have a positive effect on overall health. Medications also have side effects that can directly impact the mouth. Recognizing problems in the mouth and knowing what to do is an important part of caring for older adults.

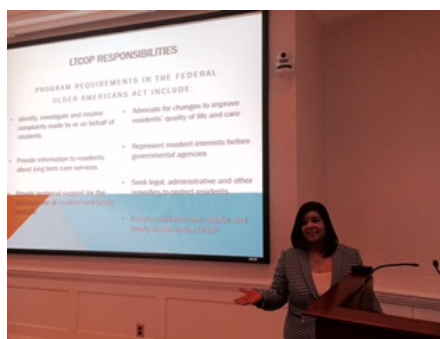
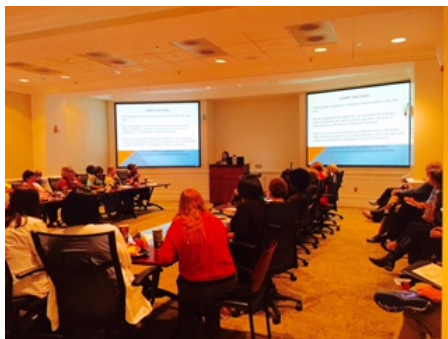
This talk will discuss why we should be concerned about the mouth of older adults, what might be seen, and what to do to prevent problems.

**Presenter:** Dr. Kevin Hendler, DDS, FASGD, FICD  
Director, Geriatric Dentistry Wesley Woods Center of Emory University Assistant Professor,  
Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology

## Community Education

Each year, the month of March has been celebrated as the National Social Work Month. Social Work staff at UAB Medicine in Birmingham, Alabama invited Kim Johnson-Prince to be a speaker for their Department of Care Transition's Annual Social Work Month Continuing Education Series. UAB Medicine's social work staff transition an innumerable number of patients to skilled nursing and long-term care facilities throughout the South-Eastern Region and beyond. On March 29<sup>th</sup> 2017, Kim provided education to approximately 50 social workers regarding the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and Resident's Rights as it relates to resident transfers across state lines.

*Pictures below are from the UAB Medicine*



## Aging in America Conference (AiA) – American Society on Aging (ASA)

On March 21, 2017, Lin and Kim conducted a presentation at the AiA conference in Chicago. The topic is “Training Makes a Difference: What Matters for Long-Term Care Ombudsmen”. Attendees at the session were from Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs and Area Agencies on Aging in other states.



**Dementia Action Alliance Conference is coming to Atlanta:**

## Dementia Conference & Technology Showcase

**Re-Imagine<sup>e</sup>**  
**Life with**  
**Dementia**  
**Engage • Empower • Enable**

**June 25–27, 2017**  
**Westin Buckhead Hotel**  
**Atlanta, GA**

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### South Ombudsman Program Volunteer Training and Recognition Events

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On April 27, 2017, Lin Chao from the office of The State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, provided a training session for all of our Volunteer Visitors. Each Volunteer received an award for the years of service given to the Ombudsman Program. The Volunteers time of service ranged from 2004 to the present. These dedicated ladies go visit the Nursing Homes in our area to be there for our residents and give them information on resident rights and the Ombudsman program brochures. The residents look forward to their visits. We especially wanted to thank the Volunteers because during the storms in January the ladies called the Nursing homes to check on the residents. They couldn't visit because the roads were impassible. Several of the Volunteers homes were damaged by the storms. Albeit, that did not deter them from checking on the residents. They were concerned for the residents' safety and well-being as well as their own. This demonstrated the true heart of a Volunteer, putting others first. South Ombudsman Program is looking forward to Lin's return next year.

*Pictures below are from the South Ombudsman Program Volunteer Recognition event*



From left, Debbie Blanton, SOWEGA AAA, Lin Chao, OSLTCO Staff, Elaine Wilson, South Ombudsman Program, and Izzie Sadler, SOWEGA AAA

## RESOURCES

### **Volunteer Opportunities with Georgia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

“You can be a lifeline for elders and individuals with disabilities who live in nursing homes, personal care homes, and assisted living communities. As a volunteer, you will visit residents, listen to their concerns, and refer identified problems to your local Long-Term Care Ombudsman office for resolution. Required training is provided. Become a volunteer and help residents stay connected to your local community.”

### **“When there’s a complaint about a nursing home, these volunteers can help”**

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/when-theres-a-complaint-about-a-nursing-home-these-volunteers-can-help/2017/04/28/6e6a2c8e-12fd-11e7-9e4f-09aa75d3ec57\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.0c3fea77be71](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/when-theres-a-complaint-about-a-nursing-home-these-volunteers-can-help/2017/04/28/6e6a2c8e-12fd-11e7-9e4f-09aa75d3ec57_story.html?utm_term=.0c3fea77be71)

### **Older Americans Month 2017 Age Out Loud: Volunteer**

In higher numbers than ever before, older Americans are using their skills, wisdom, and talents to serve their communities. Not only does giving back help others, volunteers also find that they benefit physically and mentally. Please submit your volunteers’ stories that work to improve the lives of long-term care residents.

### **Social Security Website is About to Get a Security Upgrade**

If you have an online Social Security account, you will soon need to take an additional step to access your personal information. In a move aimed at boosting protection for online users, the Social Security Administration as of June 10 will require two-factor authentication on its website. In order to log into or register for a "my Social Security" account, you will need to not only use (or create) a username and password but also enter a code you receive by text message or email. "Using two ways to identify you when you log on will help better protect your account from unauthorized use and potential identity fraud,"

<http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/adding-additional-security-to-protect-whats-important-to-you/>

## **CMS: Don't wait to plan emergency preparedness training exercises**

### **Contact Us**

#### **Georgia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

2 Peachtree Street, NW, 33rd  
Atlanta, GA 30303

1-866-552-4464, option 5

[www.georgiaombudsman.org](http://www.georgiaombudsman.org)

In October, 2016, CMS released new regulations to go into effect by November 15, 2017. The CMS Emergency Preparedness Rule requires that each facility must participate in a full-scale, community-based exercise before November 15, 2017. Moreover, CMS warns providers not to wait for interpretive guidance to begin planning emergency exercises. More information is available below:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/11/16/2016-27478/medicare-and-medicaid-programs-emergency-preparedness-requirements-for-medicare-and-medicaid>

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/provider-enrollment-and-certification/surveycertemergprep/emergency-prep-rule.html>

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/Downloads/Survey-and-Cert-Letter-17-21.pdf>

### **Recorded Webinar Available**

On April 6, 2017, the WebEx – “Volunteer Risk Management” was completed. Comments were received such as “I had a little trouble signing on, but otherwise it was great” and “experience was great”. Did you miss the OSLTCO WebEx and you wanted to attend? Continuing Education Contact Hours (CE) are available through the OSLTCO – post event. Please contact Kim Johnson-Prince about obtaining CE credit.

