

OFFICE OF THE STATE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

September-October, 2017 Volume6 / Issue61

STAFF

State Ombudsman
Melanie McNeil, Esq.

**Ombudsman Services
Coordinators**
Lin Chao
Kim Johnson-Prince
Jeff Taylor

LTCO Program Consultant
Tracey Williams

Administrative Assistant
Tina Lawrence

Newsletter Editor
Melanie McNeil, Esq.

PRAISE FOR SPEAKING/WORKSHOP: MELANIE MCNEIL, ESQ., GEORGIA STATE OMBUDSMAN

Melanie was invited to speak at the United States Ombudsman Association (USOA) conference. USOA is the association for all type of ombudsmen. Some ombudsman are neutral investigators and mediators rather than advocates. The conference included attendees from as far away as Australia and Russia. Forty-one attendees participated in the one hour-workshop that Melanie presented: **Raising Your Voice for Public Policy Advocacy as an Ombudsman** on October 4, 2017. Audience comments included: "Allow more time for presentation – 1 ½ hours." "A little more time needed for the group exercise." "The workshop is a great introduction to public policy advocacy in general, and for LTCOs specifically." "Good workshop and discussions for those that are able to advocate on particular issues, the experiences and connections with peers will provide good ideas for their own particular issues." "Well done."



November 10th state offices including the SLTCO Office, are closed for Veteran's Day.



New members of USOA.

CO-AGE Meeting in Athens, October 26, 2017 at Athens Community Council on Aging

Melanie McNeil, Esq., State Ombudsman presented information about the 2018 CO-AGE legislative priority:
Personal Care Home Requirement

<https://www.gcoa.org/issues>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/545924e4e4b0e891e46ae716/t/59f347d5e4966bac116a7d5f/1509115861367/Personal+Care+Home+Requirements.pdf>



Program Updates

South Program

On September 26, 2017 Lin Chao and Tina Lawrence participated in the Volunteer Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program ongoing training with Elaine Wilson, Coordinator. The theme of the training was Person-Centered Care. Fifteen volunteers attended the training.



State Office

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is celebrating the rights of all citizens who live in long-term care facilities during Residents Rights Month, October 2017. Residents' Rights Month is an excellent opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to residents' rights as well as honoring our long-term care residents. We strongly encourage the community to participate in Residents' Rights Month activities and to visit residents, who continue to be important members of our communities.

Our volunteer opportunities include serving as Volunteer Ombudsman Representatives, participating in the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Advisory Council meetings, and special events. On October 24, 2017, Georgia Governor, Nathan Deal, joined with Department of Human Services Commissioner, Robyn Crittenden; Division of Aging Services Director, Abby Cox; State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Melanie McNeil; Local Ombudsman Programs, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Advisory Council members, volunteers and the staff of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman to celebrate the month of October as "Residents' Rights Month".



2017 Governor's Proclamation: Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Month

https://gov.georgia.gov/sites/gov.georgia.gov/files/related_files/site_page/Long-Term%20Care%20Residents%27%20Rights%20Month%202017.pdf

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

The National Ombudsman Resource Center has a new infographic created to give a brief overview of the work Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs do and the impact they have around the nation. This infographic can be used for volunteer recruitment or program promotion. For detailed information, visit <http://ltcombudsman.org/uploads/files/support/ombudsman-program-promotion-final.pdf>

Mental Health and Older Americans

"One in four adults ages 65 and older experiences a mental health problem such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia or dementia, according to the American Psychological Association. And people 85 and older have the highest suicide rate of any age group, especially among older white males who have a suicide rate almost six times that of the general population, according to the National Council on Aging." Many studies indicate that older adults struggle to get adequate mental health care. For the complete article, visit <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2017-10-11/older-adults-struggle-to-get-adequate-mental-health-care>

Observation Status Toolkit

From the Consumer Voice:

Observation Status Toolkit from the Center for Medicare Advocacy

The Center for Medicare Advocacy has a new toolkit on observation status. Observation status is an "outpatient" category used by hospitals to bill Medicare. People are often not told of their observation status, and many people are designated as observation status even when they are extremely sick and spend several days in the hospital. Notably, observation status can affect patients' ability to obtain Medicare coverage if they need nursing home care after their stay in the hospital. Medicare only covers nursing home care for patients who had a 3-day inpatient stay; observation status does not count towards the inpatient stay. The Center for Medicare Advocacy's Observation Status toolkit includes a fact sheet on the topic, FAQs, and a beneficiary self-help packet. They are also seeking stories about beneficiaries' experiences with observation status.

<https://www.medicareadvocacy.org/medicare-hospital-outpatient-observation-status-toolkit/>

<http://www.medicareadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Observation-Toolkit-Full-2017.pdf>

