

The Role of the Long Term Care Ombudsman

As an ombudsman, our role is to help develop and support existing Resident Councils. It starts with educating both residents and facility owners or administration on the benefit of having a strong Resident Council.

It is important to treat the Resident Council as the “go to” place in the facility for addressing the home community concerns and establishing home community connections.

A long term care ombudsman assigned to the facility may ask:

1. Does one exist?
2. Is it effective?
3. How often does it meet?
4. How is it run?
5. Who is the president?
6. How many residents attend?
7. Are minutes posted with appropriate timetables?

Resident Councils vary greatly from home to home. In either case, Councils have the right to meet privately and residents should feel free to bring up concerns or suggestions for improving their home.

If you would like more information on how to start, or need support for an existing Resident Council, please call us at (808) 586-0100 and ask to speak with the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.

RESIDENT COUNCIL RESOURCES:

Contact for more information

- **The National Long-Term Ombudsman Resource Center at The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care.**

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 425

Washington, DC 20036

Phone:(202) 332-2275

Fax: (202) 332-2949

info@theconsumervoice.org

www.ltombudsman.org

- **Hawaii State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**

250 South Hotel St. Suite 406

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone (808)586-0100

Fax.(808) 586-0185

www.hawaii.gov/health/ea/

RESIDENT COUNCILS IN NURSING HOMES

ARE YOU ATTENDING YOUR RESIDENT COUNCIL?





IMPORTANCE OF RESIDENT COUNCILS:

Resident Councils:

A “Resident Council” is an independent, organized group of people living in a long term care facility that meets on a regular basis to discuss concerns, develop suggestions on improving services or resolve differences in their home. Every Resident Council is different, due to differences in both the residents who participate and in the support from the facility. Usually residents who are able to, speak up for those who cannot.

Federal and state laws give residents the right to meet as a Council. At the time of admission, nursing homes are required to inform new residents of their right to establish a Council if one does not already exist, or to participate in the activities of a council which is already operating.

Councils have the right to meet privately. Staff, relatives, friends and members of community organizations may participate at the invitation of the Council.

Why Have a Resident Council?

The lives of long term care residents are heavily controlled by laws, rules and policies set by the government and facility. Compromises in life style become necessary due to health problems and the close quarters in which residents live. These compromises and controls can make residents feel like their opinions and preferences do not matter.

Many long term care residents are not content to give up control over their lives. They want an active role in life and the chance to influence decisions which affect them. A Resident Council gives them that chance.

Importance of Resident Councils

Resident Councils are important for many reasons. They have become more recognized for the important contributions that residents make when given the opportunity to speak for themselves. They provide a forum for residents to to:

- *Voice their concerns directly to invited staff*
- *Hold the facility accountable*
- *Identify problems and their solutions from the residents’ perspective*
- *Allow residents to recognize staff they feel deserving of recognition*
- *Open up discussion on topics of interest to residents*
- *Contributes to shaping their world*

