



NORC Notes

A monthly reminder of available resources and tips for using them.

March 1, 2018

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and Systems Advocacy

What is Systems Advocacy

Systems Advocacy means to recommend changes to a system (e.g., a long-term care facility, a government agency, an organization, a corporation, policies, regulations, and law) to benefit long-term care residents. Effective and credible systems advocacy should generally be supported by data and complaint trends, but can also be in response to policy, regulatory, and legislative proposals that could negatively impact residents.

Legislative Advocacy



The OAA and Rule requires the LTCOP to participate in legislative advocacy. Legislative advocacy includes analyzing, commenting on, and monitoring the development and implementation of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies related to long-term care; facilitating public comment on laws, regulations, policies, and actions related to residents of long-term care facilities; and recommending changes to the system that promote the interests, well-being and rights of residents.

The Ombudsman and program representatives engage in legislative advocacy in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- Sharing information about pending legislation or regulations that impact residents;
- Encouraging consumer participation in the legislation or rule-making process;
- Providing testimony on behalf of residents before the legislature;
- Submitting comments and participating in the drafting of local, state, and federal laws and regulations;
- Communicating with local, state and federal representatives;
- Determining legislative activities and agenda for the LTCOP.

Coalition Building/Development of Partnerships

Another effective way to engage in systems advocacy and expand the reach of the LTCOP is to develop partnerships or build or join a coalition with other entities that share an interest in improving long-term care. Working with other entities, such as Citizen's Advocacy Groups (CAGs), Culture Change Coalitions, resident or family councils, or serving on advisory committees or task forces ensures that the interests of the long-term care consumers are represented.



Issue Advocacy



When LTCOPs analyze their complaint and activity data to identify trends and develop a systems advocacy approach in response to identified issues or a timely “hot topic” issue the program is engaging in issue advocacy. State Ombudsmen may choose an issue for statewide systems advocacy after analyzing statewide program data and/or local Ombudsman program representatives may identify a local issue based on their local data and activities and coordinate with the State Ombudsman for systems advocacy locally to address the

issue.

Additional Information

Information about systems advocacy is available on the NORC website [here](#). The webpage includes the following two revised LTCOP Reference Guides. The guides were revised to include relevant language from the LTCOP Final Rule and updated program examples.

These reference guides briefly define systems advocacy, share examples of Ombudsman programs involved in systems advocacy and provide resources for additional information.

- [Role and Responsibilities of Ombudsman Programs Regarding Systems Advocacy - State Ombudsmen](#)
- [Role and Responsibilities of Ombudsman Programs Regarding Systems Advocacy - Local Ombudsman Program Representatives](#)

Read archived issues of NORC Notes, [here](#). If you have a question, are not able to find a resource, or want to share training materials or program practices, please email ombudcenter@theconsumervoice.org.

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