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## LOCAL PROGRAM CALLS FOR VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE AS LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMEN

### ADVOCATES SEEK TO EMPOWER RESIDENTS IN NURSING HOMES

Aug. XX, 2013 – (CITY, Texas) The Texas Long-term Care Ombudsman program is calling for volunteers in the CITY (or REGION) area. Volunteer ombudsmen serve as advocates for residents living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

“Our volunteers help inform and empower residents so they can make their own choices,” says NAME, the managing local ombudsman for PROGRAM. “Residents deserve to be treated with respect, and volunteers help us achieve that goal.”

Volunteer ombudsmen visit residents, identify and investigate complaints, and educate the residents, families, and facility staff on maintaining the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals living in long-term care settings. Ombudsman services are both free and confidential.

“We have XX nursing homes and XX assisted living facilities in the PROGRAM area,” says MLO LAST NAME. “A strong volunteer force helps us ensure that every resident has a voice.”

Though the long-term care ombudsman program is housed within the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, it operates independently – issuing its own opinions on a range of issues, including the condition of facilities, resident rights issues, and federal, state, and local policies. Every state, according to the Older Americans Act, is required to have an independent long-term care ombudsman program that offers residents an independent advocate who can help resolve issues on their behalf.

NAME, a local volunteer ombudsman, says he/she finds the work rewarding. “Sometimes I am the only visitor the residents see other than care staff. Being a voice for them – especially if they can no longer speak for themselves – is important to residents, their families, and to our community.”

*and to provide services to help in protecting health, safety, welfare and rights. Information and assistance in choosing the most appropriate living residence is also a valuable service. Across Texas, through all area agencies on aging, certified ombudsmen serve residents, their families and friends.*