

Dear, _____,

My name is [name], Managing Long-Term Care Ombudsman for the [agency name], which includes ____, ____, ____, and ____ counties. I serve residents in long-term care facilities in [list each legislator's title and name]'s district.

For over 10 years, I have had the pleasure to serve as an advocate for residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities. In this position, I have heard the struggles from residents pertaining to the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA). The PNA is the monthly sum of money that residents who receive Medicaid may keep from their monthly income. Often, this is the only money a person who uses Medicaid will have for the month. Since 2009, in Texas the PNA has been \$60, despite inflation. This allowance is intended for residents to spend on personal items such as telephone expenses, cigarettes, a meal out with friends, cards to send to family, reading materials, and hobbies. Residents have the right to use this fund at their discretion, and they are not required to deposit it with the facility.

The topic of PNA is important to residents, ombudsmen, and other advocates in our efforts to reach a higher standard of quality of life in long-term care facilities. The PNA provides residents the opportunity to participate in activities beyond those provided by the facility, to remain connected with family and friends, and to obtain basic items such as clothing and shoes. These activities and items have a significant positive impact on the residents' quality of life and are a valuable complement to the services provided by the facility.

If a resident uses Medicaid to pay for his or her stay, the facility must provide nursing services, dietary services; certain activities programs; room/bed; maintenance services; routine personal hygiene items and services; and medically related social services, among others. However, if a resident requests a service or item that is more expensive or not covered by Medicaid or Medicare, the resident must pay for it using her PNA. For example, a resident may prefer a specific type of shampoo or pull-up briefs; Medicaid does not pay for these items and the resident must use her own money to buy them.

I am passionate about helping residents raise the PNA, in part, because I have felt the personal impact of rising cost of gas, food, clothing, and hobbies. Residents of long-term care facilities feel inflation just like people who live independently in the community do.

I urge you to do all you can to increase PNA for residents. Enclosed are letters from residents in your district, asking for your support to raise the PNA.

Sincerely,

[ombudsman name, title, contact information]