

**Information about the  
Office of the Ombudsman  
for Mental Health and  
Developmental Disabilities**

In 1987, the Legislature created the Office of the Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, an independent state agency, to:

*“...promote the highest attainable standards of treatment, competence, efficiency, and justice... for persons receiving services or treatment for mental illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependency, or emotional disturbance...”*

**Death and Serious  
Injury Reporting**

An agency, facility, or program is required to report to the Ombudsman Office the death or serious injury of a client within 24 hours of the incident.

Call: (651) 757-1800 or (800) 657-3506

Fax: (651) 797-1950

**Equal Opportunity Statement**

The Ombudsman Office does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status or status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, membership in a local human rights commission or disability in employment or the provision of services.

This material can be given to you in different forms, like large print, Braille or on a tape, if you call 1-651-757-1800 or 711 TTY and ask.

Regional Ombudsman staff provide assistance to clients living in the community as well as at the Regional Treatment Centers.

<b>Anoka:</b>	651-431-5201
Fax:	651-797-1964
<b>Brainerd:</b>	218-828-2366
Fax:	651-797-1965
<b>Duluth:</b>	218-279-2526
Toll Free:	877-766-5481
Fax:	651-797-1966
<b>East Metro:</b>	651-757-1810
Fax:	651-797-1953
<b>Fergus Falls:</b>	218-736-1895
Fax:	651-797-1955
<b>St. Peter:</b>	507-985-2052
Toll Free:	888-845-6116
Fax:	651-797-1959
<b>SW Metro &amp; East MN:</b>	651-757-1812
Fax:	651-797-1957
<b>West Central MN:</b>	320-231-5962
Fax:	651-797-1963
<b>West Metro:</b>	651-757-1811
Fax:	651-797-1951

**Office of the Ombudsman  
for Mental Health and  
Developmental Disabilities**

121 7th Place East  
Metro Square Building, Suite 420  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-2117

**Voice:** (651) 757-1800

**Toll Free:** 1-800-657-3506

**Minnesota Relay Service:** 711

**Fax:** (651) 797-1950

**E-mail:** ombudsman.mhdd@state.mn.us

**Website:** www.ombudmhdd.state.mn.us



STATE OF  
MINNESOTA

**OFFICE OF THE  
OMBUDSMAN  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
AND  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES**

**ASSISTING PERSONS  
RECEIVING SERVICES FOR:**

**MENTAL  
ILLNESS  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES  
CHEMICAL  
DEPENDENCY  
EMOTIONAL  
DISTURBANCE**

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## Definitions

**Ombudsman** is an official who is designated to assist you to overcome the delay, injustice, or impersonal delivery of services.

**Client** is any person served by an agency, facility, or program, who is receiving services or treatment for mental illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependency, or emotional disturbance.

**Agency** means (1) the divisions, officials, or employees of the Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Education, local school districts, or (2) county social services agencies "that are engaged in monitoring, providing, or regulating services or treatment for mental illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependency, or emotional disturbance."

**Facility or program** means a residential or non-residential program or an acute care inpatient facility that provides services or treatment for mental illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependency, or emotional disturbance. The latter includes psychiatric units in private hospitals.

## Why call an Ombudsman?

You may choose to call with:

- a concern or complaint about services.
- a question about rights.
- a grievance.
- access to appropriate services.
- an idea for making services better.
- a general question or need for information concerning services for persons with mental disabilities.

## How We Decide Who We Can Assist

Concerns or complaints can come from any source, and should involve the actions or inactions of an agency, facility, or program. Issues can be client-specific or a system-wide concern.

Priority is given to:

- Matters affecting the health, safety, or welfare of clients.
- Situations of abuse or neglect.
- A disregard of client rights.
- The deaths and serious injuries of clients.
- The quality of services provided.
- Policies and practices that diminish client dignity or independence.
- Laws or rules, their interpretation and their effect on services to clients.

## Actions We May Take

The Office tries to resolve concerns or complaints in a way that improves the quality of care clients receive.

Possible actions by the Office include:

- Mediate or advocate on behalf of a client.
- Consult with providers about policies, practices, and procedures.
- Gather and analyze information.
- Conduct reviews and/or investigations.
- Review Deaths and Serious Injuries.
- Examine records.
- Make site visits.
- Make recommendations, issue reports, and monitor results.

## Things to Try Before Calling an Ombudsman

A difference of opinion or misunderstanding is often resolved by simply taking the time to talk and listen. Here are some basic steps in trying to resolve the issue yourself.

- **Be Prepared** - have relevant information available before you call the agency or program. A short telephone call may save hours of time and headaches.
- **Be Pleasant** - treat others as you would like to be treated. Getting angry or rude will not resolve the problem and may confuse the real issues.
- **Keep Records** - take notes, ask for names and titles of those you speak to and keep all correspondence.
- **Ask Questions** - ask why the agency or program did what they did. Ask for the relevant rules, policies, or laws.
- **Read Everything Sent To You** - Many agency decisions may be appealed but there are deadlines and procedures to follow.

If you have followed these suggestions and are unable to resolve your problem, please give us a call. We may be able to assist you.

**When you make a complaint in good faith, Minnesota State Law protects you from retaliation.**