



Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Aging Services-Oklahoma Human Services

P. O. Box 53159

Oklahoma City, OK 73152

Ombudsman.intake.line@okdhs.org

<http://www.okdhs.org/programsandservices/aging/ltc/>

Oklahoma Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Guidance to staff

Revised 07/21/2020

New Guidance Effective 07/21/2020

- New Supervisor trainings will be held via Zoom. Dates to be announced
- The August, 2020 Ombudsman Tri-annual meeting is cancelled. Dates for the FFY 2021 trainings will be transmitted at a later date
- All volunteer monthly meetings should be held via Zoom or other electronic format.
- All new volunteer trainings will be conducted in a manner that adheres to the [social distancing guidance](#) from the CDC.

New Guidance Regarding Telework

The Aging Services Division office building will be closing in the near future. The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman will continue to utilizing a robust telework plan. Each Program Manager has been issued a cell phone and Ombudsman Supervisors should utilize those numbers to communicate with their Program Manager. Each Program Managers phone number and work hours are listed below. Please always utilize their state issued cell phone numbers and only during regular work hours, unless it is an emergency.

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|-------------------|--------------|------------------|
| • Bill Whited | 405-365-9432 | M-F 7:30 to 4:00 |
| • Tony Fullbright | 405-664-2244 | M-F 7:30 to 4:00 |
| • Gerri Randolph | 405-982-2963 | M-F 7:30 to 4:30 |
| • Michelle Goins | 405-982-2286 | M-F 7:30 to 4:00 |
| • Sherra Belk | 405-982-2710 | M-F 8:15 to 4:45 |

The main intake line at 405-521-6734 will eventually go away and a new electronic intake system is being implemented. Residents and others can file complaints directly with their Ombudsman Supervisors at the Area Agency on Aging or by e-mailing the information to Ombudsman.intake.line@okdhs.org . All forms with the previous intake phone number will be updated to reflect the new e-mail line. Please transition away from referring consumers to the 6734 number.

Processes for transmitting transfer and discharge notices issued by facilities to the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman will also change. The new process will be for the facility to send all faxes electronically by e-mailing them to Ombudsmanfax@okdhs.org . The fax machine at the state office

(405-522-6739) is still operational at this time but will be discontinued in the future. Please transition away from referring residents and facilities to the 6739 fax number and start utilizing the new e-mail fax system.

Safety for staff and volunteers

- **Volunteer Ombudsman are still restricted from in person-visitation until further notice;**
- Staff need to review these resources before visiting facilities:
 - Oklahoma plan to re-open visitation https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/sites/g/files/gmc786/f/oklahoma_reopening_in_long_term_care_facilities_final_20200610.pdf
 - CDC Guidance “What You Should Know” <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>
 - CDC Guidance “What You Should Do If You Are Sick” <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>
 - What You Need to Know about Handwashing <https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo>
- Staff and volunteers need to contact their supervisor if they are sick and are not to visit any long-term care facilities if they are showing any symptoms. If Staff do show symptoms we recommend that they contact their healthcare provider for medical advice.
- Any staff that have traveled internationally need to monitor themselves for symptoms (coughing, sneezing, or fever) and contact their healthcare provider for advice if they have symptoms and/or want to be tested.
- If an Ombudsman’s health condition places them in a high risk category as outlined by the [CDC](#) they should coordinate with the State Ombudsman Office and the Area Agency on Aging on reasonable accommodations to protect them while fulfilling their duties.

Guidance for Facility Visits

- Ombudsman should become familiar with the facilities visitation policies and ascertain what phase of re-opening they are currently in.
- In-person visits should only be conducted in phase three facilities.
- Outdoor visitation is encouraged whenever possible;
- If you are showing any symptoms of illness **DO NOT** visit a long-term care facility for any reason;
- Visit no more than one facility per day;
- Observe proper social distancing;
- Spend no more than 15 minutes with any one resident/complainant;
- No in-person visit should be conducted with any resident that has COVID or is suspected of having COVID ;
- The Ombudsman will utilize telephone responses for all complaint investigations for residents with COVID or suspected of having COVID;
- Before staff Ombudsman conduct in person visitation you must:
 - Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a surgical mask, N95 mask, and gloves;
 - Wash your hands before, during, and after your facility visit.
 - Wash your hands between visiting residents’ rooms. If handwashing is not readily available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching people (don’t shake hands or hug). It is okay to explain that you are limiting physical contact to prevent spreading your own germs.
- To prevent spreading germs only bring necessary items into the facility (e.g., leave your purse, bag, and other items in your car).
- Wipe down items you bring into the facility with a disinfectant wipe before and after visiting.

- Place your business card or other items on a hard surface, instead of handing it to someone to limit hand-to-hand contact.
- Keep a travel log of all places visited on any given day.
- Observe staff and others for hand washing and speak with leadership regarding their hand washing and infection control practices. Share prevention information with facility leadership, such as:
 - *CMS - Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Nursing Homes (QSO-20-14-NH)* <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-14-nhpdf.pdf>
 - *CDC – Strategies to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html>
- If a resident is in isolation due to a communicable disease (including COVID-19), postpone visiting the resident until the resident is no longer in isolation. If necessary, communicate with the resident by phone or contact your supervisor and/or State Ombudsman to discuss options for communication.
- **If a facility is in quarantine due to COVID-19 or another communicable disease, do not visit.** Contact your supervisor and/or State Ombudsman to inform them of the quarantine. During the quarantine, communication can occur by other means such as phone, email, video conferencing with individual residents, Resident Council leadership, staff, and families.

State Level Coordination

- Review your program’s policies and procedures regarding visitation, infection control, and emergency preparedness. Consider updating or creating policies as necessary. Refer to ACL’s [Emergency Preparedness and Response: Model Policies and Procedures for State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs](#) as a resource.

CMS Actions to Prevent Spread of COVID-19 for Facilities and Surveyors

CMS recently issued guidance for surveyors ([QSO-20-12-All](#)) and a call to action to long-term care providers ([QSO-20-14-NH](#)) and hospitals to assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Effective immediately, CMS is suspending non-emergency surveys of all healthcare facilities and has directed that states focus surveys to the following activities (in Priority Order):

1. All immediate jeopardy complaints and allegations of abuse and neglect.
2. Complaints about infection control.
3. Statutorily required recertification surveys.
4. Surveys of facilities/hospitals that have a history of infection control deficiencies at the immediate jeopardy level in the last three years.
5. Surveys of facilities/hospitals that have a history of infection control deficiencies at lower levels than immediate jeopardy.

Review the memo ([QSO-20-12-All](#)) for more details regarding the protocols for the survey process in facilities with actual or suspected cases of COVID-19 and visit this [CMS page](#) for updates.

Keep an eye on your inbox for a comprehensive review of the recent CMS guidance from the Consumer Voice.

Stay Informed

We recommend checking the [CDC website](#) for the most timely, comprehensive information about the national response to the outbreak. Links to additional information are below.

We’ve created a [webpage](#) on the password-protected side of the website with information for State Ombudsmen, including examples of program communication and policies and procedures from your peers ([WA COVID-19 Outbreak and LTC Ombudsman Program Policy](#), [KY LTCOP Special Edition Email](#)).

ACL – <https://acl.gov/COVID-19>

CMS – <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/quality-safety-oversight-general-information/coronavirus>

NORC –

- *Coronavirus Prevention in LTC Facilities: Information for State Long-Term Care Ombudsmen* - https://ltcombudsman.org/state_home/state_support/COVID-19 (password-protected SLTCO side)
- *Infection Control* issue page – <https://ltcombudsman.org/issues/infection-prevention-flu-viruses-and-other-health-issues>

Consumer Voice - <https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/covid-19>

Please contact us if you have questions or program management examples to share.