

Welcome

- We will start the webinar at the top of the hour. This webinar will run for 90 minutes.
- All lines are muted.
- If you have questions or comments during the webinar, please type them in the Chat box (at the bottom of your screen).
- The PowerPoint and materials will be put in the Chat box.
- This webinar is being recorded and the link to the recording and handouts will be sent to everyone on Wednesday.
- This webinar (and other NORC webinars can be found [HERE.](#))



The National **Long-Term Care**
Ombudsman Resource Center

COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

Ensuring Resident Access

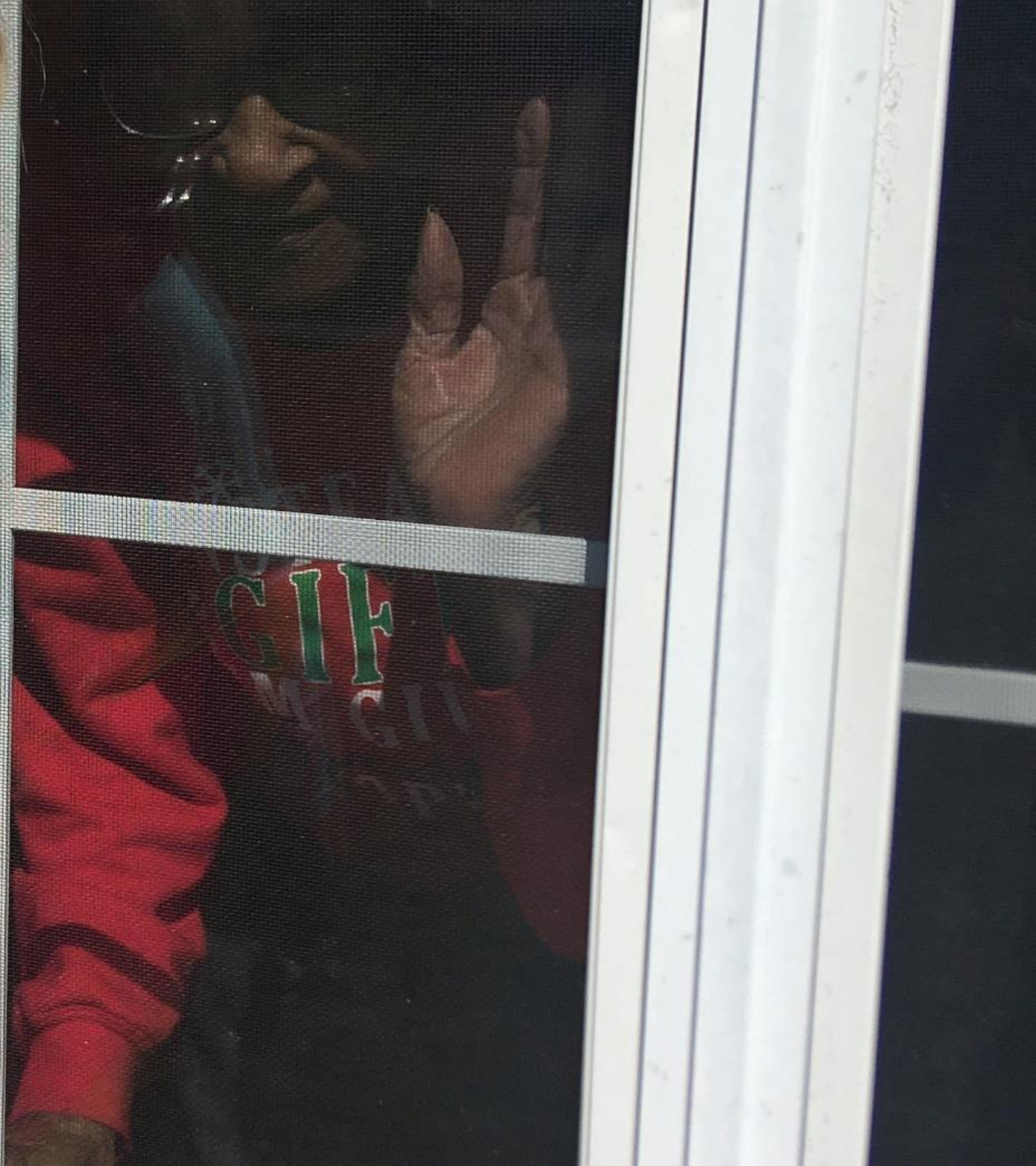
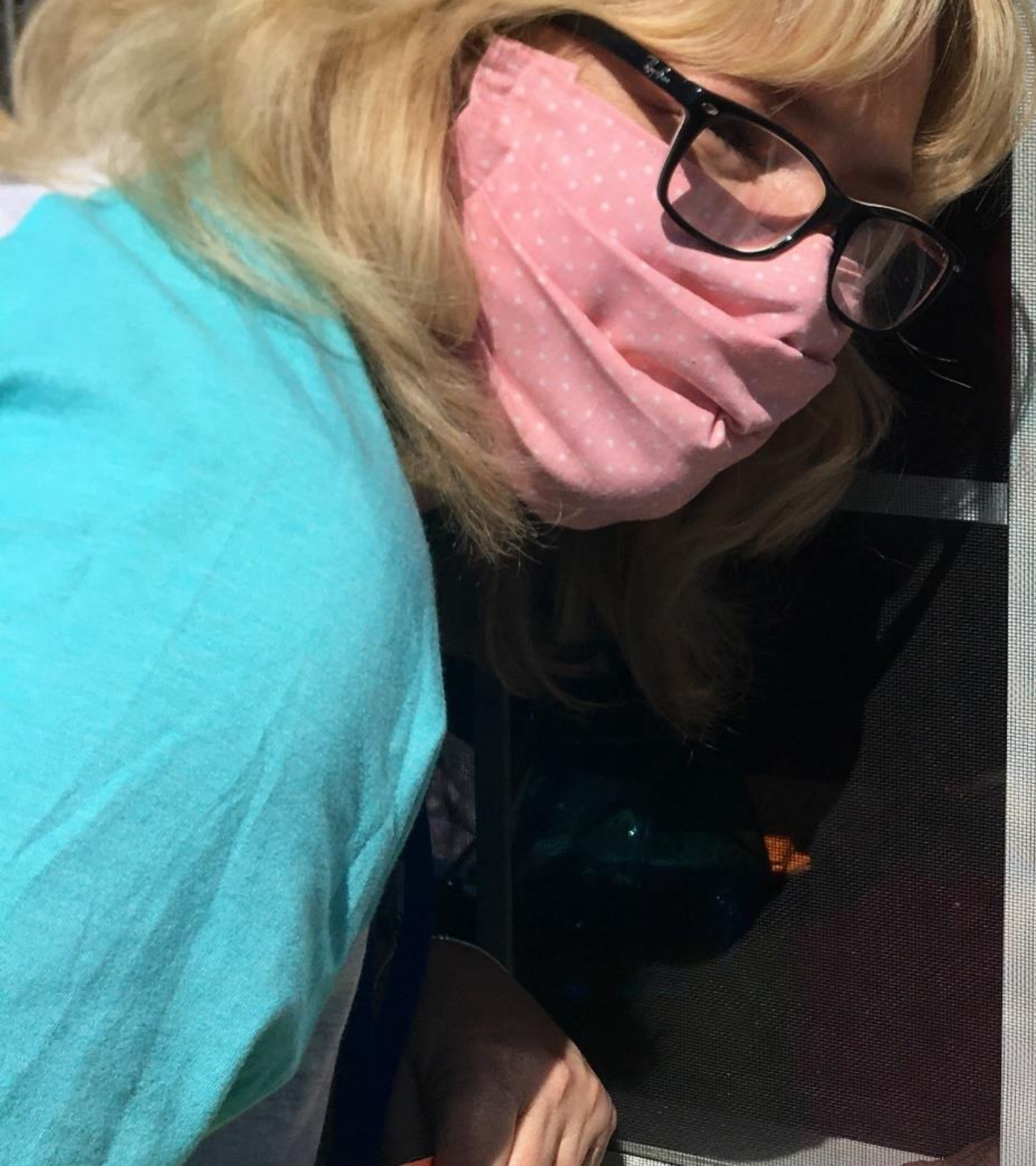
June 23, 2020

Goals

- Exploring the various ways the LTCOP is communicating with residents, family, and long-term care facility staff.
- Sharing how Ombudsmen and their representatives advocate for residents when in-person visitation is limited.
- Encouraging programs to “think outside the box.”
- Recognizing that the LTCOP is a powerful voice and must continue to speak out about the needs and wants of residents.


Speakers

- **Kim Palmore**, Managing Local Ombudsman kpalmore@atcog.org Texas LTCOP
- **Carolyn Tenaglia**, Northeast Region Ombudsman c-ctenagli@pa.gov Pennsylvania LTCOP
- **Kimberly Shetler**, Ombudsman Specialist c-kshetler@pa.gov Pennsylvania LTCOP
- **Vicki Elting**, Assistant State LTC Ombudsman vickie@mschelps.org Washington State LTCOP
- **Kathleen Heren**, State LTC Ombudsman kheren@alliancebltc.org Rhode Island LTCOP
- **Beverley Laubert**, State LTC Ombudsman blaubert@age.ohio.gov Ohio LTCOP
- **Carol Scott**, Ombudsman Specialist cscott@theconsumervoice.org NORC





We Love You! 

Stay Strong 
Smile On!

Keep your
Sunny Side
Up! ☺

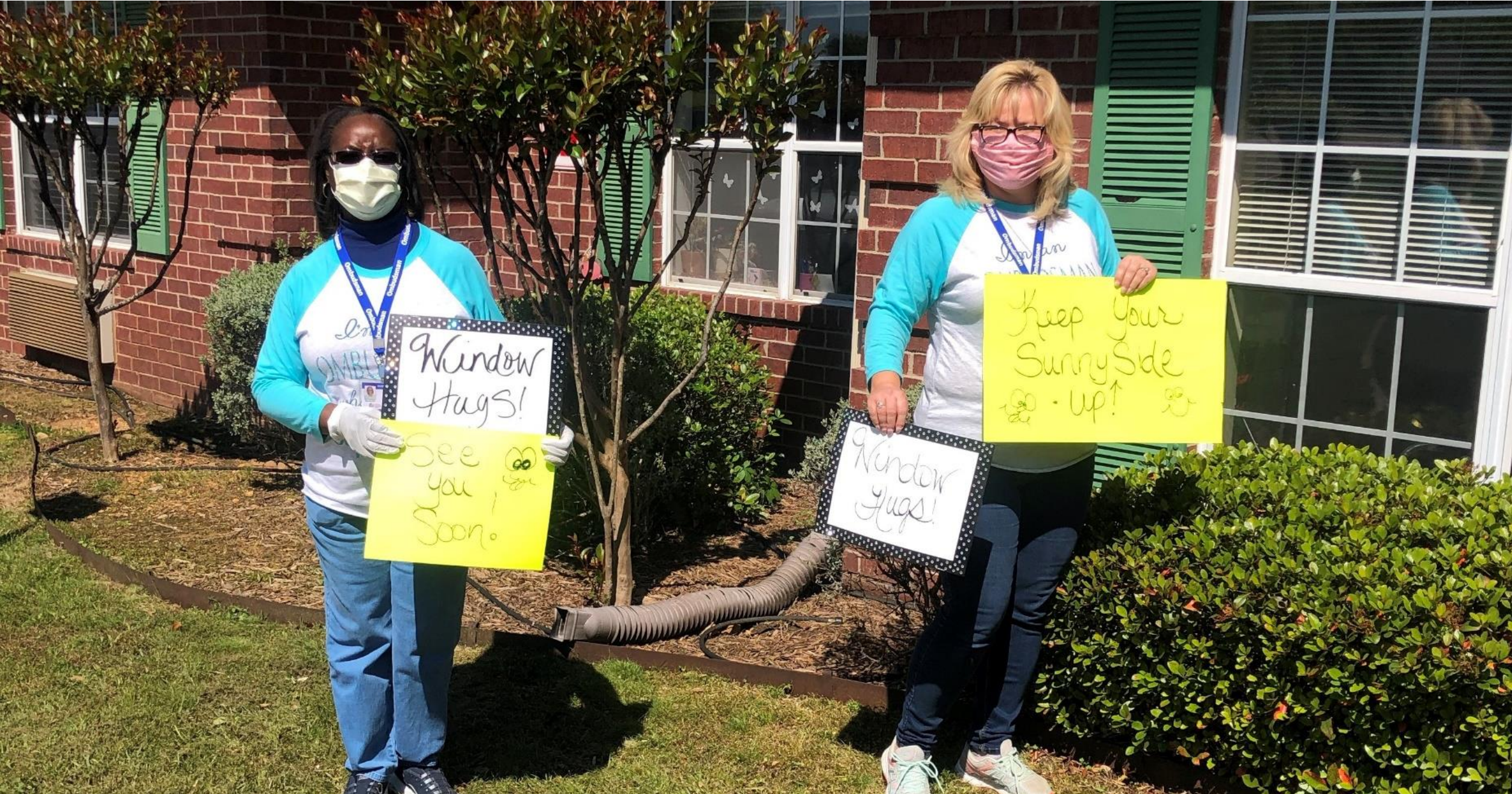
Smile On!

NO Virus
Bugs With
Window Hugs!

See
you
Soon! ☺

We Love You! ♥

I Window



Communicating with Residents

This memo provides guidance on window visits to long-term care facilities during this public health crisis.

Please be aware that this policy is subject to change as the COVID-19 situation develops.

As Ombudsmen, our role is to advocate for the health, safety, welfare, and rights of long-term care facility residents. Right now, we are faced with a challenge on how to meet the needs of residents while dealing with this potential emergency. First and foremost, all Ombudsmen must put their own health and safety needs before the needs of residents. If an Ombudsman has a serious underlying medical condition, that individual should talk to his or her doctor to see if they should conduct window visits. For information on people who are at higher risk, see the CDC's guidance here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

Source: Illinois LTCOP

https://ltcombudsman.org/uploads/files/support/il-Illinois_Ombudsman_Memo_-COVID-19_Window_Visits_5_18_2020.pdf

- Create a resident newsletter with advocacy tips, residents' rights, and other pertinent information.
- Create a brief video and share it on your website, social media, and send to state and local news broadcasts. Ask long-term care facilities to air the video on their internal channel, if available.



Visit the [NORC website](#) for state and local examples of window visits, letters and newsletters for residents, Facebook live events for residents and families, a promotional video, and other innovative ways to support and connect with residents.

Conversation Starters

Consider developing a script with talking points and questions to use during routine calls to residents and their representatives to offer support and answer questions or concerns.

Here are some example questions to use as conversation starters with residents after you introduce yourself, the program, and the purpose for your call. Share your contact information with each resident and encourage them to share it with their family members or other residents.

How are you?

Are your needs being met?

Do staff respond promptly when you use your call light or ask for assistance?

Have you noticed any changes that concern you?

Are you receiving your medications on time?

How are your meals?

Have you been able to communicate with your friends or family or other community members?

Do you have access to a computer, tablet, or a smart phone?

Are you interested in video calls?

Is there anything you can think of that would help you communicate with your loved ones better?

Do you have any questions or concerns?

Would you like to correspond by email if you have an email address?

Would you like for me to contact you or your representative for on-going communication?

2

Communication with Long-Term Care Facility Staff

Communication with providers is crucial and an integral link between you and residents while visits are limited as many residents need assistance with technology, do not have their own phone/tablet/computer, or you

- Kentucky Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency Commitment Video to Kentuckians Living in Long-Term Care



TEAM
KENTUCKY

NURSING HOMES
"STILL" ON LOCKDOWN.

"We ARE People Too!"
"S O T L I S F E A R D"

Alabama

- The local Ombudsman entity (Central Alabama Aging Consortium) sent cards to every resident living in assisted living facilities and nursing homes in their tri-county area.
- Signs/large cards were sent to nursing homes for children to be posted next to beds and cribs.
- Representatives are participating in weekly parades at facilities.



New York

- Volunteers sent personal handwritten notes to 10 residents that had been in touch with the program recently and may need assistance.
- Reached out to residents who tend to know what's happening in a facility.
- Mailed letters to those who work in the facility store, frequently sit in lounges or common areas, or are friendly with other residents. They included business cards with the program phone number and a brochure to remind residents how the program can support them.
- This outreach led to receiving several phone calls with “news” of residents or concerns which were followed by phone calls with nursing home staff.

Resident and Family Council Communication

- Telephone calls
- Emailing resources or information to council presidents
- Skype
- FaceTime
- Zoom meetings
- Email (and group emails)
- Town Hall meetings
- Statewide or Regional calls

Consumer Voice Resources for Family Councils:

<https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/family/family-council-center>

NORC Resources:

<https://ltcombudsman.org/issues/family-and-resident-councils>

VIRTUAL FAMILY COUNCIL

PA OFFICE OF THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN



WHAT

- A weekly, statewide, on-line gathering of families who have loved ones residing in long-term care settings
- A forum to network with other families
- A source of information, support, and assistance



WHY

- Covid19 resulted in a sudden, pro-longed separation between family members
- Press coverage of the pandemic and the stories of impact on long-term care consumers heightened family anxiety and desire for answers and accountability
- Ombudsman phones/emails were seeing increased requests for information and assistance at a time when our resources were strained and adjusting
- The virtual meetings allowed us to serve more families efficiently and in a timelier manner

HOW

Work-group / Identify Facilitator

Discussed as a state team; put a call out to our network to identify local ombudsmen interested in facilitating and assisting – creating a workgroup



Prep & Planning

Workgroup met & established basic format and opted for a bi-monthly schedule

Created a corresponding Facebook page



Developed outreach materials to distribute to locals, legislators, partner agencies & providers
Engaged in press interviews and other community platforms to inform the general public of this new resource

HOW

- Logistics:

Getting link out to participants
Managing the “flow” of the
meetings, muting, etc.

- Meeting follow-up

EVALUATING RESPONSE

- Increased frequency of meetings to weekly
- Increased meeting time from 1 hour to 90 minutes
- Increased meeting capacity via ZOOM
- Facebook metrics as a measure of reach

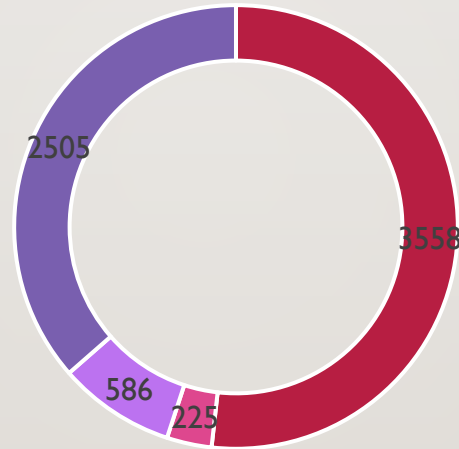


TOPICS COVERED AND SCHEDULED

- What is an Ombudsman
- Alternative Visitation
- Advocacy & National Consumer Voice
- Alzheimer's, Dementia and Resources for Families Impacted
- Coping Mechanisms and Strategies for Families
- Dialogue with Decision Makers – Exec. Dir. BAR & Senator
- PA Attorney General's Office

FACEBOOK METRICS

People Reached



■ Page Engagement

■ Post Engagement

■ Daily Page Reach Low

■ Daily Page Reach High

UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Facebook – Chat feature group added Engagement
- Obstacles – time
presence of facility staff
technology challenges




UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES

Learning
Engaging in Systems Advocacy
Connecting Families to Decision-
Makers

List-serv and connection of over 300
families in the long-term care community
We can send resources
We can send media blasts
We can solicit feedback/survey families


Getting the Message Out

[Call Now](#) [Like](#) [Message](#) [Search](#) [More](#)

**Texas Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**
June 3 at 7:54 AM · 🌐

Texas' State Ombudsman, Patty Ducayet, is quoted in this story.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2020/06/01/coronavirus-nursing-home-deaths-top-40-600/5273075002/>



USATODAY.COM
'A national disgrace': 40,600 deaths tied to US nursing homes

**AARP** ✓
May 2 · 🌐

Do you have a concern or complaint about a nursing home or assisted living community? Your state or local long-term care ombudsman may be able to help.



AARP.ORG
How to Find the Long-Term Care Ombudsman in Every State

What's Working!

- Conference calls/3-way conference calls
- 1:1 calls
- Texting
- Written letters
- Zoom meetings
- Posters/flyers in the facilities and on outside of the front door
- FaceTime with residents and staff for care plan meetings
- Hosting an LTCOP table during outdoor visitation time to be available to speak with residents and their visitors.

But, not always!

- Many residents cannot email and don't use or have access to some technology tools.
- Facilities may not be familiar with Zoom or other communication tools.
- Representatives (and families) report facility phones not being answered, and voice mailboxes are full, and they cannot leave messages.



Tough Times

- *I meet once per week with my staff. Each week our work seems to take on another level of grief. This week the unfortunate topic of suicide ideation leads the top 5 concerns. Residents expressing more often the wish for death much in part due to the effects of isolation and quarantine. We as Ombudsman continue to fight for compassion care visits. I realize there is a balance, but we need a strong voice to communicate the important resident stories that reflect the effects of COVID-19 and the response to COVID-19 has on residents in long-term care facilities. Cheryl Hennen, Minnesota State LTC Ombudsman*

Rhode Island Advocacy

Neronha Says Federal Stimulus Dollars Can't Be Seized by Nursing Homes or Other Care Facilities

Saturday, June 13, 2020

GoLocalProv News Team

201
Shares

 Tweet





Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha announced Friday that he has issued **guidance** informing nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and long-term care facilities that they are not permitted to seize, retain, or confiscate a resident's federal stimulus payment. The Attorney General has received complaints of facilities confiscating federal stimulus payments from residents.

"Our older and more vulnerable residents deserve to receive their federal stimulus payments like everyone else. These payments belong to the residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and long-term care facilities and not to those facilities," said Neronha. "This is true regardless of whether a resident is Medicaid-eligible or a Medicaid beneficiary, and regardless of any debts that may be owed to a facility by a resident."

Nursing home patients have been hit hard by the coronavirus as more than 70 percent of all deaths linked to the virus are nursing home patients.

In March, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided direct cash assistance to individuals and families in the form of a one-time cash payment, known as a stimulus payment. Rhode Islanders, including those residing in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and long-term care facilities received federal stimulus payments of up to \$1,200 by direct deposit, paper check, or prepaid debit card.

Confiscation Illegal

Facilities that receive these federal stimulus payments in the mail for residents must immediately deliver the payments to the residents. Facilities that may have already confiscated a payment from a resident must immediately return the funds to them.

If facility administrators have concerns about delivering or returning payments because of a resident's incapacity or mental health, they should contact the resident's guardian or legal representative, or contact the Attorney General's Office at (401) 274-4400 (prompt 6) or email elderabuse@riag.ri.gov.

Additionally, federal stimulus payments under the CARES Act are not considered income under Medicaid rules.



Attorney General Peter Neronha

[VIEW LARGER +](#)

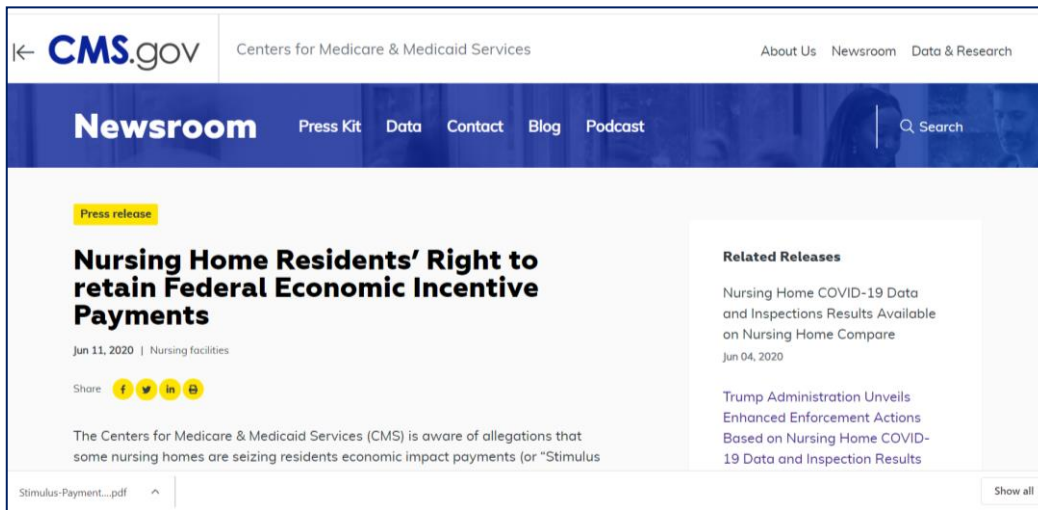
Stimulus Checks....Are They Getting to the Resident?

The following questions were asked when facilities were contacted regarding the handling of their resident's stimulus checks:

- Have you distributed the residents' stimulus check?
- For residents with no family or a responsible party, have you placed the money in a dedicated interest-bearing account?
- What plans do you have for evaluating the residents' needs in purchasing things they need?
- Do you know that you have to keep all purchase receipts for what you buy?

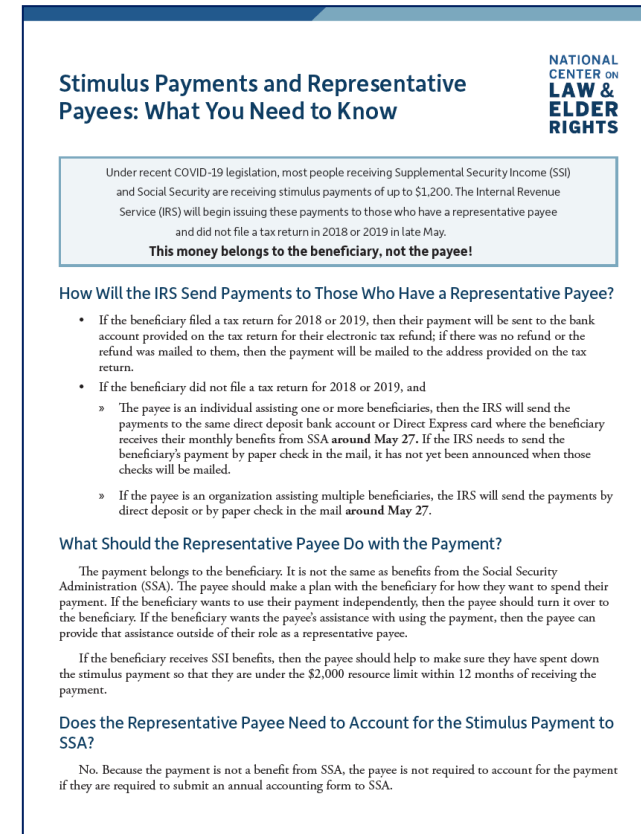
Resources – Stimulus Checks

CMS Press Release



<https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/nursing-home-residents-right-retain-federal-economic-incentive-payments>

National Center on Law and Elder Rights (NCLER) Fact Sheet



[https://ncler.acl.gov/getattachment/Resources/Nursing-Home-Residents-and-Stimulus-Checks-\(1\).pdf.aspx?lang=en-US](https://ncler.acl.gov/getattachment/Resources/Nursing-Home-Residents-and-Stimulus-Checks-(1).pdf.aspx?lang=en-US)

Testimony on Complaints Received During COVID-19

THE OHIO CHANNEL

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A SERVICE OF OHIO'S PUBLIC BROADCASTING STATIONS



BEVERLEY LAUBERT
DEPARTMENT OF AGING: OMBUDSMAN

JUN 10, 2020
HOUSE AGING COMMITTEE

THE OHIO CHANNEL

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Ohio House Aging And Long Term Care Committee - 6-10-2020
June 10, 2020 | View Details

Ohio House Aging And Long Term Care Committee

A full record of House Committee proceedings is available here:
ohiohouse.gov/committee/aging-and-longterm-care

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Communication with Long-Term Care Facility Staff

- [Iowa Facility Check-In Questions](#)
- [Georgia Facility Interviews](#)
- [Maine PSA Honoring Staff](#)
- Ask the facility how they will ensure that residents have confidential communication and access to the Ombudsman program and share best practices to ensure access.
- Coordinate with the facility to identify a staff person for you to contact on a regular basis to check-in and address complaints.

QUESTIONS?

RESOURCES

Tips for Ombudsman Program Communication

with Residents, Long-Term Care Facilities, Families,
and the Public During COVID-19

Purpose

In-person visitation restrictions¹ imposed to reduce the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) required Ombudsman programs to adapt quickly to ensure residents continue to have access to program services. In-person visits with residents are a core part of Ombudsman program outreach and advocacy and there is no substitute; however, during this crisis programs must use other means to connect with residents. This resource provides tips and examples to promote effective communication between the Ombudsman program and residents, families, providers, and the public when in-person visitation is limited.

Communication with Residents

General Outreach

Help residents understand why the Ombudsman program cannot visit while in-person visitation is restricted. Explain that the program is still available to assist them and tell them how to contact the program. You can share this information in a variety of ways:

- Mail letters to facilities and ask staff to distribute them to residents.
- Create a resident newsletter with advocacy tips, list of rights, and other pertinent information.
- Email Resident Council leadership and other residents.
- Email a letter to facilities and ask staff to print and share the letter with residents.
- Email or mail Ombudsman posters and/or flyers and ask facility staff to post them throughout the facility and on the outside of the facility's front door.
- Share via social media and on your program's website. Ensure information shared is current. Make content engaging (e.g., highlight one resident right a week with examples and articles related to that right).
- Create a brief video and share it on your website, social media, and send to state and local news broadcasts. Ask long-term care facilities to air the video on their internal channel, if available.

Connect with Residents

- Routinely request contact information for residents and resident representatives, including contact information for Resident and Family Council leadership. Establish regular contact with Resident and Family Council leadership and call/email other residents and resident representatives as often as possible.

¹ CMS Ref. QSO-20-14-NH <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/3-13-2020-nursing-home-guidance-covid-19.pdf>

NORS FAQs: COVID-19

NORS FAQs: COVID-19



IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT VISITS: In-person visits with residents are a core part of Ombudsman program outreach and advocacy and NORS reinforces this importance by requesting that Ombudsman programs report all visits. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, visits have been dramatically curtailed. It is important that Ombudsman programs accurately reflect this decrease to show the impact of the pandemic on the program and residents. There is no substitute for an in-person visit, while outreach by other means is necessary, we do not want to give the impression that the program operated as usual. ACL anticipates that there will be a sharp decrease in visits, and that is appropriate, given the circumstances.

Q: Due to COVID-19 visitation restrictions, I am contacting residents to check-in with them and provide information by phone, email, and/or video calls. Do I count phone, email, and/or video conversations as “routine access visits/non-complaint visits” or information and assistance?

A: **Communication with residents via phone, email, and/or video is not a visit.** Document the communication described above as information and assistance. Refer to *Part I: Case, Complaint, Complainant, and Information and Assistance* [NORS Training materials](#) for definitions of case, complaint, and information and assistance; *Part IV: Ombudsman Program Activities* [NORS Training materials](#) for definitions and examples of visits; and ACL Tables 1 and 3 for definitions, examples, and reporting tips.

Q: Due to COVID-19 visitation restrictions, I am contacting staff of the long-term care facilities in my region by phone and/or email to establish lines of communication, get a resident census and contact information for resident representatives, share information, and answer questions. How do I document these conversations?

A: **Document as information and assistance to facility staff and associate it to the type of facility (nursing facility or residential care community).** Communication with facility staff via phone, email, and/or video is not a visit. Refer to *Part I: Case, Complaint, Complainant, and Information and Assistance* [NORS Training materials](#) for definitions of case, complaint, and information and assistance; *Part IV: Ombudsman Program Activities* [NORS Training materials](#) for definitions and examples of visits; and ACL Tables 1 and 3 for definitions, examples, and reporting tips.

Q: I contacted a resident and facility Administrator by phone to follow-up on a complaint due to recent visitation restrictions. Do I document that communication as a “complaint related visit” since I can’t follow-

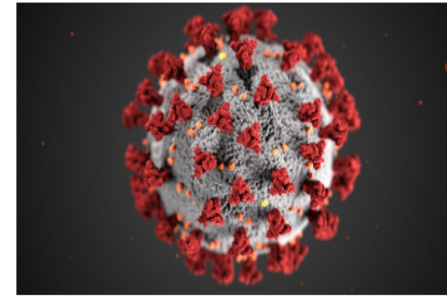
<https://ltcombudsman.org/uploads/files/support/nors-faqs-covid.pdf>

NORC COVID-19 Information

- Administration for Community Living (ACL)
 - <https://acl.gov/COVID-19>
- Updates and Information
 - CMS
 - ACL
 - NORC
 - Consumer Voice
 - Ombudsman programs

Coronavirus Prevention in LTC Facilities: Information for Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs

Updated June 16, 2020



As the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak continues to evolve, it is important for Ombudsman programs and other advocates to be informed and take precautions in order to prevent the spread.

For more information, visit:

[ACL COVID-19 page](#)

[CMS COVID-19 page](#)

[Consumer Voice COVID-19 page](#)

[CDC COVID-19 page](#)

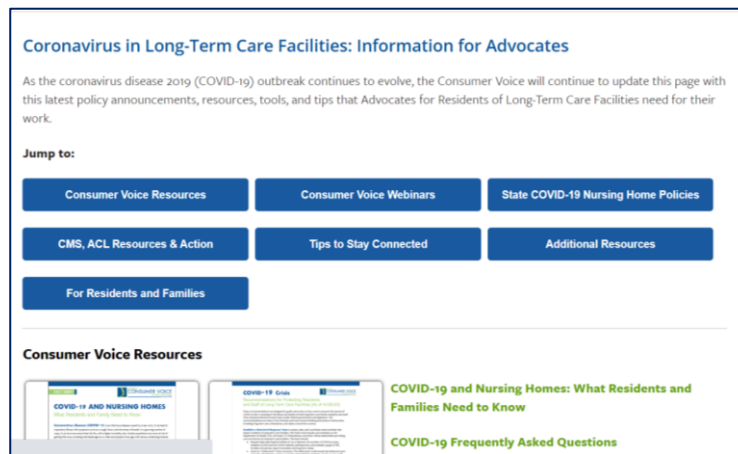
The information on this page includes tips for preventing the spread of COVID-19, alternative ways to stay in touch with residents, and links to additional information. **Jump to:**

https://ltcombudsman.org/omb_support/COVID-19

Consumer Voice COVID-19 Information

Information for Advocates

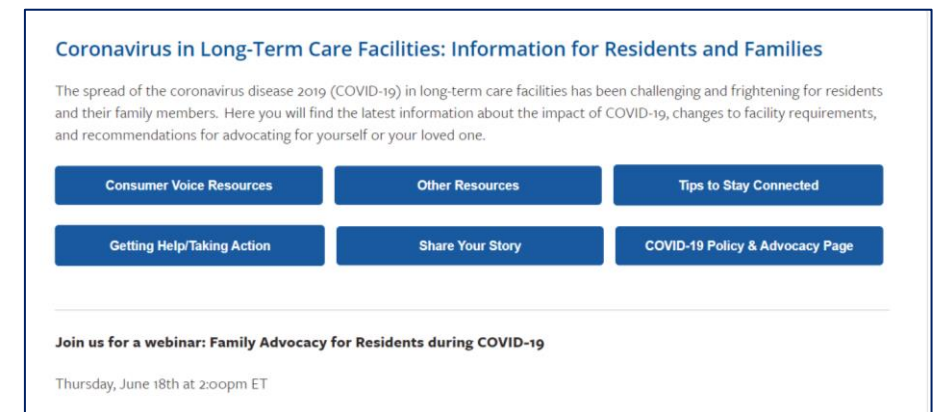
- Fact Sheets
- Weekly Webinars
- Map with State COVID-19 Nursing Home policies



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

Information for Residents and Families

- Tips to Stay Connected
- Get Help/Take Action
- Share Your Story



<https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/covid-19/residents-families>

States' Public Release of Information Regarding Covid-19 Outbreaks in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

The information below details what information states are releasing to the public regarding the presence of Covid-19 in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. It reveals that the quantity and quality of information varies greatly by state. It is important to note that this information is changing all the time, and as federal and state regulators increase reporting requirements, we expect the instances of public disclosure to increase. We will do our best to keep the list up to date. The links provided are to the most recent data as of 4/24/2020.

State	Reporting Resident Cases?	Reporting Resident Deaths?	Reporting Staff Cases?	Broken Down by Facility?	Reporting Assisted Living Cases?	Additional info	Source
Alabama	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		https://alpublichealth.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/6d2771faa9da4a2786a509d82c8c007
Alaska	No	No	No	No	No		https://coronavirus-response-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/covid-cases-public
Arizona	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Arizona DOH data dashboard. Some info on "congregate cases" which lists nursing homes and assisted living facilities, but not exhaustive or conclusive. There has been a push by AARP to get the state to release the names of the facilities.	https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/covid-19/dashboards/index.php
Arkansas	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unclear		https://adem.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/f533ac8a8b6040e5896b05b47b17a647 https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus https://www.nwahomepage.com/lifestyle/health/coronavirus/health-department-reports-11-positive-cases-of-covid-19-at-rogers-nursing-home/
California	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	CA Dep of Public Health with data about number of infections in homes. Numbers are not completely accurate, but show greater than or less than a certain number, most often 11.	https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/SNFsCOVID_19.aspx
Colorado	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		https://covid19.colorado.gov/data/outbreak-data
						The state as been releasing daily data on Covid and periodic updates on NHs are imbedded in them. This link reveals a data	

<https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/covid-19>
scroll down to "State COVID-19 Nursing Home Policies"

**One size fits all...aih don'
think so !**



October 01, 2020 - October 31, 2020

October is Resident Rights Month



Residents' Rights Month is an annual event designated by the Consumer Voice and is celebrated in October to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities and consumers receiving services in their home or community. It is a time for celebration and recognition offering an opportunity for every facility to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect and the value of each individual resident.

This year's theme is "**Connection Matters.**" The theme emphasizes connections – to family, to friends, and to the community – as an essential component of good health and quality of life for residents. The months of restrictions on visitation in long-term care facilities and the inability of residents, families, and friends to be together during the coronavirus pandemic has emphasized the importance of connection, of relationships, and the impact they have on all of our well-being. During this crisis, many creative ways of staying connected were shared that can be replicated and built upon in all communities.

[RRM Main Page](#)[Promotional Materials](#)[Resources](#)[Resident's Voice Challenge](#)

Do You Receive Our Emails?

Join our database to receive webinar notifications, the *Ombudsman Outlook* (quarterly e-newsletter), the *NORC Notes* (monthly resource reminder), and more.

To receive our emails directly, use this link to sign up now:

<https://ltcombudsman.org/sign-up>





The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center

Connect with us:

www.ltcombudsman.org
ombudcenter@theconsumervoice.org



The National LTC Ombudsman Resource Center



@LTCombudcenter



Get our app! Search for "LTC Ombudsman Resource Center" in the Apple Store or Google Play

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