

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
Alaska Mental Health
Trust Authority

BILL WALKER, GOVERNOR

Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman

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October 14, 2016

Dear Administrator,

Last month, you received a letter and brochures from our office which provided information on how you could assist the residents in your facility to register to vote. As the November 8th election date approaches, we encourage you to assist the residents in your facility to vote. Residents living in nursing facilities retain their right to vote no matter where they live or what type of care they receive, **even if they have a guardian**. Please share the brochures enclosed with this letter with the residents in your facility to encourage a discussion on how you can assist them to vote.

Below are some ways nursing facility staff can assist residents to vote:

- Ask family members if they are willing to support their loved one to vote
- Provide transportation to and from the polls during early voting or on election day
- Assist residents in completing a ballot in person or a mail in absentee ballot by explaining instructions, reading the ballot choices, checking the ballot to ensure it accurately reflects the resident's choices and reviewing the ballot for any choices that may have been missed

Here are things facility staff **CANNOT** do when assisting a resident to vote:

- Influence a resident's vote or mark a ballot in any way other than as directed by the resident
- Tell anyone how the resident voted
- Vote by proxy, for example: "In the past, this resident has always voted a straight party ticket. Now she does not respond to anything around her, so I will vote her ballot as a straight party ticket, because that is what she would have wanted."
- If staff are unable to reliably determine how the resident wants to vote, they cannot assist a resident to complete a ballot

Feel free to call us at 907-334-4480 (1-800-730-6393) if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Teresa Holt
State Long Term Care Ombudsman