

WHAT OMBUDSMEN DO (AND WHY WE NEED THEM)

A True Story

A woman called the Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency (NHOA) recently after nursing home staff delivered a “notice of discharge” to her 99-year-old mother. The notice stated that in 30 days, the facility would send Betty to her daughter’s home due to “failure to pay.”

The notice blindsided the daughter. Elderly and with health problems of her own, she was incapable of taking care of her mom, who was bedridden with Alzheimer’s disease, unable to communicate, and not expected to live to her 100th birthday. Nor would she be able to visit if the facility transferred her mom to a facility in another town or state.

When our Ombudsman investigated, she discovered that facility staff had failed to offer the daughter assistance with filing for Medicaid recertification. Lacking proper documentation, Medicaid stopped paying the nursing home. NHOA and an attorney responded by filing an appeal.

Betty remained in the nursing home while the Ombudsman worked on the issue. Months after the case was resolved, Betty passed away peacefully in the little room that had been her home for a decade.

Headquartered in Lexington, the Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass, Inc. (NHOA) serves residents of 17 counties in the Bluegrass Area Development District, one of 15 districts in Kentucky. NHOA’s service area includes the following counties: Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Clark, Estill, Fayette, Franklin, Garrard, Harrison, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Mercer, Nicholas, Powell, Scott, and Woodford. Visit www.ombuddy.org for a list of other districts and counties that are part of the Kentucky State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

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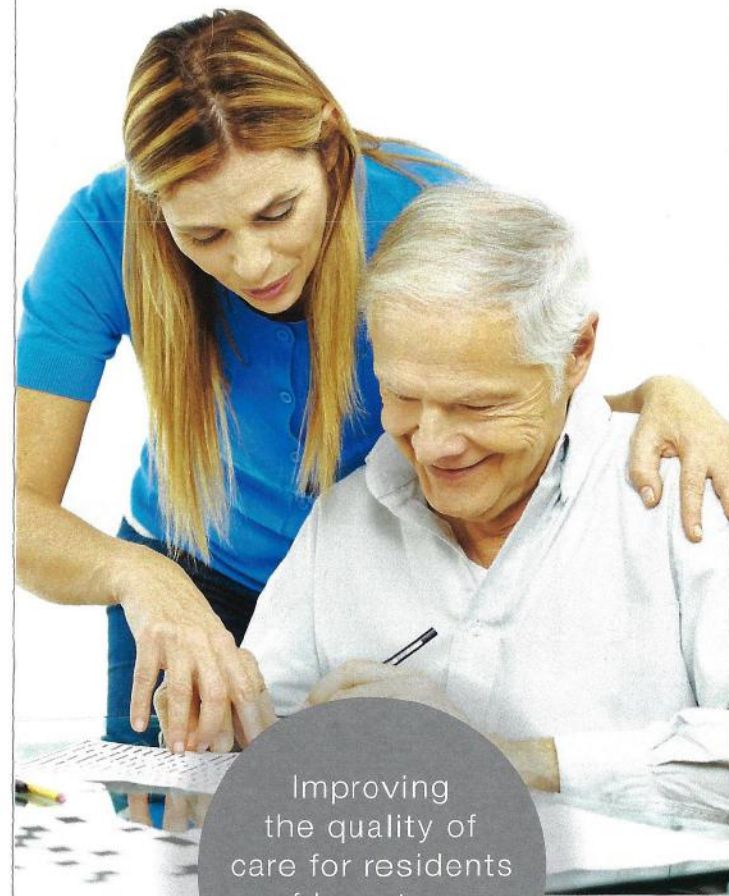
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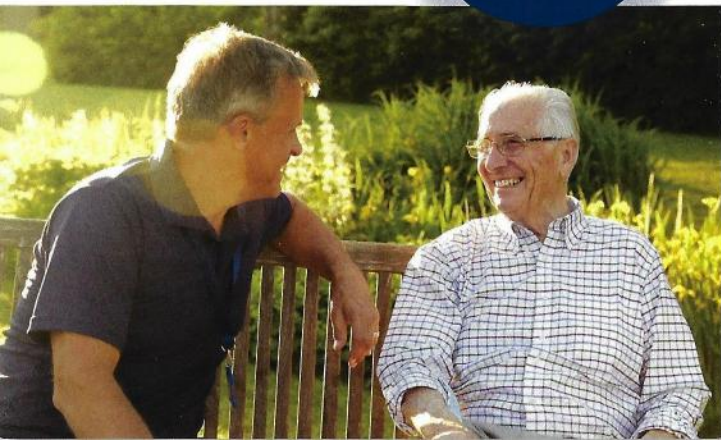
Improving
the quality of
care for residents
of long-term
care facilities.

The Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass, Inc. improves the quality of care and safety for hundreds of thousands of residents of long-term care facilities. Every year, our Ombudsmen make 5,000 visits to more than 100 long-term care facilities in the 17-county service area.

Our certified Ombudsmen are specially trained to listen to residents and to identify, investigate, and resolve complaints and problems. In addition, they

- inform residents of their special legal rights and protect their rights
- look for signs of physical, psychological, financial, and sexual abuse
- empower residents to speak up about their concerns
- develop trusting relationships with residents
- help individuals in the outside community navigate the complex long-term care industry
- provide training and education to nursing facility staff and members of the community.

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Did You Know?

There are approximately **5,700** residents of long-term care facilities in the 17-county service area.

- **50 percent** of long-term care residents have Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia
- **60 percent** have no visitors, ever, from outside the facility—except their Ombudsman
- **70 percent** are impoverished
- **80 percent** are women



In addition to advocating for residents, Ombudsmen also help individuals in the community make informed

decisions about long-term care options for their loved ones. The Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass is the only source of accurate, unbiased, and free information about long-term care in Kentucky. We guide families to information that helps them zero in on facilities that will best meet their loved one's needs. Families who made quick, crisis-driven decisions tell us if they had contacted us first, it would have prevented a great deal of stress and confusion.

Background

Founded in 1981, the Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency grew out of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA). It requires Ombudsmen to investigate and resolve complaints made by residents of Kentucky's long-term care homes. However, residents or their representatives must give the Ombudsman consent to investigate or to review their records.

How You Can Help

- **Commit** to visiting one resident once a week at a nursing facility of your choice. With two hours of training and successful completion of a criminal background check, you will join the ranks of the Friendly Volunteers and become another set of eyes and ears for Ombudsmen.
- **Give.** There is never a charge for NHOA services. The generosity of people like you enables us to provide services for free to everyone who needs them. Every gift matters, regardless of amount.
- **Share** your talent and provide sustaining financial support as a member of the board of directors.

Contact us at
859.277.9215 or
nhca@ombuddy.org

