

What Does an Ombudsman Do?

What should long term care staff know about their local ombudsman? Read on to learn more!



The Role of the Ombudsman

A local ombudsman's primary role is to support (be an advocate for) and empower residents. Here is what a long term care ombudsman does...

- ⇒ Educate residents about their rights and how to benefit from them
- ⇒ Protect residents' rights
- ⇒ Promote dignity and choice
- ⇒ Meet privately with residents
- ⇒ Assist residents to identify and resolve concerns
- ⇒ Build trusting relationships with residents
- ⇒ Listen to resident concerns and complaints
- ⇒ Help residents file complaints and appeals
- ⇒ Provide information and assistance
- ⇒ Connect residents to legal and community resources
- ⇒ Clarify policies, rules, and regulations
- ⇒ Problem-solve
- ⇒ Provide education on long term care issues (including adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation)
- ⇒ Educate policy makers and the public

Who Is Our Local Ombudsman?

Sara Gusler is the local ombudsman for Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties.

Sara says, "It's all about resident rights and how they want to act on those rights. We work for the residents, so *they* determine whether or not we can take action."

Her goals are the residents' goals and she ensures residents are able to understand and use their rights. The ombudsman program also works to make positive changes to the whole long term care system.

To reach Sara, call (517) 394-3027 or email: sgusler@meji.org

Important Information

Did you know...?

- ✓ Services are free and confidential
- ✓ Ombudsman only have access to **licensed** long term care settings: nursing homes, homes for the aged, and adult foster care homes
- ✓ Ombudsmen are not visitors and do not need permission to see a resident
- ✓ Anyone can make a referral to the ombudsman program
- ✓ The ombudsman program is **not** a regulatory agency and cannot impose penalties on long term care facilities
- ✓ Ombudsmen are **NOT** mandated reporters and won't share information without residents' permission

Reporting

What if someone other than the resident calls an ombudsman about suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a resident?

The ombudsman will contact the resident to offer assistance and discuss solutions, including reporting the abuse, but only if the resident wants to.

If the resident does not want to report or is not able to express his or her wishes to the ombudsman,
the ombudsman may still be able to help.

Note: *Even though ombudsmen are not mandatory reporters, staff are mandatory reporters and must report suspected cases of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation!*

Contact the Ombudsman Program

Staff should assist a resident who requests help with getting in touch with a long term care ombudsman.

For free and confidential help, call (866) 485-9393 or email: mltcop@meji.org

For more information about the Michigan Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, go to: mltcop.org <https://>



To Report Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation

Of a nursing home resident by a staff member: Call State of Michigan LARA @ (800) 882-6006

Of an older adult living at home, in assisted living, adult foster care, home for the aged, or a nursing home, by anyone who is *not* a staff member, call:

Adult Protective Services: (855) 444-3911

If you think a crime has occurred: Call your local police/sheriff department (and LARA)—If the danger is immediate, **call 911**

Thank you for the work you do to protect your residents and other vulnerable adults!



For More Information

Long Term Care Ombudsman: (517) 394-3027

Tri-County Office on Aging: (800) 405-9141

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