

## Resident Councils



Nursing home residents have the right to form and hold regular private resident council meetings.

An effective resident council empowers residents, assists with alerting staff to problems, and gives residents a unified voice.

Please encourage your residents to form a council and attend resident council meetings! Working together on issues and concerns benefits everyone and can help bring positive changes to the home... all great ways to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

**Read on to learn more about the importance of Resident Councils!**

## What is a Resident Council?

Resident councils are independent, organized groups of residents that meet on a regular basis. Residents may express concerns, plan social activities, request improvements, and support one another. They also support the nursing home's efforts to provide the best possible care and quality of life for residents.

Many nursing home residents are not content to give up control over their lives. This is their home where they want an active role in life, a voice, and the chance to influence daily decisions that affect them. The resident council does just that.

## What Does the Law Say?

**Federal law states that residents have the right to organize and participate in resident groups...**

- to plan resident and family activities
- to participate in educational activities
- to discuss and offer suggestions about policies and procedures that affect their care, treatment, and quality of life
- to support each other
- for any other purpose

**What should the nursing home do to support a resident council?**

- The home must provide a private meeting space for council meeting
- Staff or visitors may attend meetings **only at the invitation of the council**
- A designated staff person is responsible for assisting with and responding to written requests from the group (*but shouldn't attend meetings unless invited*)
- The home must listen to and act upon the concerns and recommendations of residents that concern their care and quality of life

[State Operations Manual F-565; CFR 483.10(f)(5)]

## Food for Thought...

If your home doesn't have a resident council, is there a resident you might encourage to consider starting one?



## Benefits of Resident Councils

Having active resident councils will benefit residents and staff alike. Below are some of the many benefits of effective resident councils, which include...

- improving communication within homes
- being a place to brainstorm, share ideas, and discuss topics of interest to the residents
- giving residents a voice to speak out about concerns
- protecting residents who fear retaliation
- helping identify problems and being a part of the solution
- promoting friendship and connections between residents
- speaking up on behalf of residents who cannot speak for themselves

As one administrator (Maxine Cardwell) stated: *"I believe if we have a strong resident council, it helps the whole facility—because not only do we have cooperation from the staff, we have cooperation from the residents as well. They want to make things work, and they help me because they are here 24 hours a day, and they see what goes on."*



## Helpful Resources

If residents need any assistance, they can contact the Michigan Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (MLTCOP). We can provide ongoing support to the council if they request our help.

For a fact sheet on Resident Councils from the **Mich. Long Term Care Ombudsman Program**, click on: <https://mltcop.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Resident%20Councils.pdf>

For information, tips, and tools, visit **The Consumer Voice Resident Council Center** at: <https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/>

## 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**



Every time you offer *person-centered care to your residents, you are helping prevent abuse.*

## For More Information

Long Term Care Ombudsman: (517) 394-3027  
Tri-County Office on Aging: (800) 405-9141

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