



Raising Your Voice for Public Policy Advocacy as an Ombudsman

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Objectives

Understand how a Long-Term Care Ombudsman Representative advocates for LTC residents

Understand the authorization for long-term care resident advocacy

Understand advocacy for those receiving long term services and supports

Understand the different types of advocacy

Understand how you can become involved

LTC Ombudsmen

Long-term care (LTC) ombudsmen are advocates for resident rights. They help protect the quality of life and quality of care of anybody who lives in a nursing home or an assisted living facility.

Ombudsmen can be volunteers or paid employees of agencies that are independent of any long-term care facility. Services are free, confidential and available statewide.

Public Policy Advocacy: Authorized and Required

Created by federal law 42 U.S.C. 3001, et seq. (Older Am. Act)

Requires long-term care ombudsman representatives:

1. Identify, investigate and resolve complaints
2. Represent resident interests before governmental agencies pursuing administrative, legal and other remedies
3. Analyze, comment on and recommend changes to federal, state and local laws, regulations and other governmental actions
4. Facilitate resident participation in advocacy

Systems Advocacy

Systems advocacy focuses on influencing and changing the system

Systems advocacy includes policy and law reform activities, contact with elected officials, media releases, publications and community trainings

Why is it important for you to be an advocate for public policy changes

You are the experts

You have the opportunity to influence policymakers

Your work will ultimately be impacted by policymakers' decisions

You are voters and can hold policymakers accountable

Advocacy=Persuasion

Policymakers are looking for solutions and innovations

Advocates can persuade policymakers to make the best decision and choices

You know the real-life impacts of current policies and how changes can improve lives

Entity Systems Advocacy

With what entities do you interact?

What systems change is needed?

Example: Nursing home - pests

Administrative Advocacy

Aimed at non-legislative policy-makers or administrative agencies

Address need related to specific issue or problem or policy

Target audience: Committees, agency heads, non-elected policymakers

- Example – PCH, ALC, Proxy Caregiver rule-making

Legislative Advocacy

Aims at lawmakers (at any level – city, state, or federal) with the intent of informing officials and/or influencing specific legislation

Target audience: City Council, State legislature, Congress

Example:

- Traffic issue for nursing home residents
- Increase Personal Needs Allowance
- Medicaid Block Grants and Long-term Care Residents

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(at any level – city,
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Example:

- Traffic issue for NH residents
- Increase Personal Needs Allowance
- Medicaid Block Grants and Long-Term Care Residents

Target audience:
City Council, State
Legislature,
Congress



Example - Legislative Advocacy

Georgia Ombudsmen delivered approximately 2,000 signed petitions to the State Capitol urging an increase in the Personal Needs Allowances (currently just \$65 a month) for Nursing Home Residents.

Personal Needs Allowance

Beginning July 1, 2019 the State of Georgia is increasing the Medicaid Personal Needs Allowance for institutional Care from \$65.00 per month to \$70.00 per month. This increase will allow individuals who receive institutional care Medicaid benefits to keep \$70.00 each month from their income to pay for items they may want, such as haircuts, shoes, gifts, and snacks, etc. This year, the House and Senate agreed to increase the PNA by \$5 to reach the total authorized in legislation.

The Personal Needs Allowance is the monthly sum of money that residents who receive Medicaid may retain from their personal income. Any income above the allowance is applied toward the cost of their care

Developing Your Systems Advocacy

What is the issue – proposing or opposing

What entity determines the policy for the issue

Who influences those policy makers

Who are your allies

Who are your opponents

Developing the Advocacy Story

Data supports advocacy efforts – Annual Report, news stories

Data helps policy makers justify the policy

Individual stories tell the tale – make the case on a personal level

Develop written materials for advocates to share with policy makers and others

Recruit advocates to spread the word

Be prepared for opposition

Use media to raise awareness

Engagement: Policy and Lawmaking

Identify legislators

Make appointments

Present your case

Follow up

Email

Prepare advocates to testify

Have constituents follow up

Make regular contact until success achieved – Mary Frances Again

How does a bill become law?

Georgia example:

- Conceptualization
- Introduction by legislator
- Committee hearings
- Committee approves
- Referred to Rules Committee
- Added to chamber calendar for floor debate
- Floor vote
- Sent to other chamber for similar process
- Conference committee to reconcile differences
- Final approval in each chamber
- Signing by Governor

Examples of Successful Advocacy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWbDboSVsfw>

<https://www.gcoa.org/engage> (CO-Age Budget 2019)

<https://www.gcoa.org/2020issuesubmissions> (Legislative Priorities - Issue F: Guardianship Resource Center)

<https://www.gcoa.org/news> (Advocates for the elderly seek funds)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/545924e4e4b0e891e46ae716/t/593eb97859cc6864066ca859/1497282936362/L+Legislative+Personal+Care+Home.pdf>

Developing issue – Benefits Trafficking

Issue

What level of advocacy

Proposed language

Allies

Champion

Opposition

Strategy

Group Activity



**Identify an issue for systems
advocacy**



**Create a systems advocacy
campaign strategy**

Developing your issue

Entity issue

Local issue

State issue

Federal issue

Is it a budget issue or a legislative issue

Who are the key influencers?

What are your key messages?

Who are your allies?

Who are your opponents?

What entity determines the policy for the issue

What are the key messages

Who influences those policy makers

Who are your allies

Who are your opponents

Create an
advocacy
campaign
strategy

Stay Connected

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