

OMBUDS BULLETIN

October 2023

Volume 9

**“Count your age by friends,
not years.
Count your life by smiles,
not tears.”**

-John Lennon

I'm a bud, you're a bud, we're Ombuds!

A QUARTERLY BULLETIN PUBLISHED THROUGH THE LOUISIANA LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

A NOTE FROM THE STATE LTCO OFFICE

As we enter this celebratory Quarter, filled with holidays in November and December, it is essential to take a moment to reflect on the important journey we undertake in our roles as advocates for residents in long-term care facilities.

In October, we commemorate Residents' Rights Month, an occasion to honor the most cherished rights held by those living in long-term nursing facilities. We asked several residents to share their thoughts on these rights; their insights can be found in the Residents' Rights column.

It's crucial to recognize that these rights are not mere abstractions but are enshrined in law. The Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987 is the federal legislation that guarantees residents their rights, offering them the protections and dignity they rightfully deserve.

Our society is aging, a testament to the progress of our world. Thankfully, past policymakers had the foresight to implement legislation that ensures comprehensive services and support programs for our aging population. In the Older Americans Act column, we revisit the crucial aspect of our work and its impact on our aging communities.

In this edition of the Bulletin, we have a unique opportunity to hear from the voices that matter most – our older adults, the residents in nursing facilities, and our dedicated volunteer ombuds. In the Let's Chat section, you will find valuable insights into the aging process, fostering a deeper understanding of the experiences of those we serve.

I am particularly pleased with this Ombuds Bulletin because it is not just a repository of information but a reflection of active engagement by older residents and younger advocates alike. This bilateral communication enhances our ombudsman advocacy program, making it more robust and effective in serving the needs of our residents.

My gratitude to you for tirelessly dedicating your time, energy, and heart to the ombudsman program. Together, we make a profound difference in the lives of those we serve, ensuring that their rights, dignity, and well-being are upheld.



Thank you all.

Rosa Walton, State Ombudsman

KUDOS!



Ombudsmen celebrating anniversaries:

Tanya Hayes, New Orleans, 10/1/2007

Glenda Teagle, Baton Rouge, 11/5/2009

Beverly Gianna, New Orleans, 10/23/2013

Anne Miller, Baton Rouge, 11/20/2014

Barbara Soniat, New Orleans, 11/14/2016

Lucinda Thornton, Shreveport, 10/20/2020

Briana Smith, New Orleans, 10/1/2022

Rose Waguespack, Alexandria, 10/28/2022

Reta Stewart, Shreveport, 12/7/2022

What's in a name?



An Om what? Bud who?

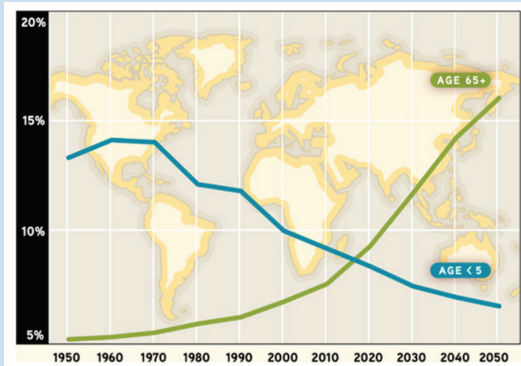
When introducing ourselves, haven't we heard that often from residents, staff, and the community? Ombudsman, Ombudsperson, Ombud? The term varies in states and organizations. Steadily the word "ombudsman" is being supplanted with ombudsperson or now more frequently with ombud. This term seems friendly, easy to say, and easier to remember. The Louisiana Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program will always be as titled; however, it is up to each individual to use the most comfortable term. It is each individual's choice.

Did You Know?

- ▶ Louisiana has approximately 400 licensed nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- ▶ Over 35,000 residents are in Louisiana nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- ▶ There are (to date) 26 staff and volunteer LTC ombudsmen in the LTCOP.

IMPROVING THE AGING PROCESS: LET'S CHAT!

Briana Smith, PhD student, Interdisciplinary Aging Studies Program - Tulane University, Volunteer LTC Ombudsman, New Orleans



Our world's population is aging.

People over age 65 account for 8% of the world's population, around 500 million!

For the first time in human history, people aged 65 and over outnumber children under age 5. In the United States today, people over age 65 outnumber children under age 10. As the last of the Baby Boomers (77 million strong) reach age 65 by 2030, it is so important to talk about what it means to age- in-place and to do so successfully.

WHAT IS AGING?

Hard to define by researchers, even harder to study. This field is still growing!

Hayflick Limit – the cells in our body can divide 50 times. When we grow older, our body's ability to clear out old cells gets weaker. These cells remain in our body but are not able to divide (cell cycle arrest). This is called **senescence**.

Senescence is a driving factor for aging, and causes inflammation which can disrupt other cells in our body, causing disease. Age itself is not a disease, but the media often portrays it that way.

So, does aging successfully mean being free from disease? NO

This is not realistic for many people. The key is managing your physical health – taking medications as prescribed, keeping up with doctor's visits, living a healthy lifestyle

LOL

How does the ocean say hello?

It waves.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

Summer wasn't bad either.

What vegetable does a pumpkin become when an elephant stands on it?

Squash.

Laughter truly is a powerful medicine with numerous health benefits. Not only does it strengthen the immune system, but it also acts as a natural mood booster. In addition, laughter can diminish pain and serves as a preventive measure against depression and the harmful effects of stress. Incorporating laughter into your life can lead to improved overall well-being.

So make it a point to laugh out loud often!

Do you have a joke you would like to share?

Please submit it to StateOmbudsman@la.gov and it may appear in the next Ombuds Bulletin.



WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL AGING MEAN TO YOU?

Across cultures, these are the most common answers, in order:

- Social life/community engagement**
- Positive attitude/emotional well-being**
- Maintaining independence**
- Physical health**
- Cognitive health**
- Spirituality**

RESIDENTS' RIGHTS MONTH.

October is Residents' Rights Month, an annual event designated by Consumer Voice to honor residents living in long-term care facilities and those receiving care in their homes or communities. It is an opportunity to focus on and celebrate the dignity and rights of every individual receiving long-term services and support.

This year's Residents' Rights Month theme – “Amplify Our Voices” - emphasizes a community of long-term care residents coming together to make their voices heard. Amplifying one's voice means being outspoken about preferences and choices and sharing experiences. Residents' voices are the most important at the decision-making table - every story deserves to be told!



Rose: “Through the ombudsman program, I found so many dos and don'ts. I found out how I can help others while helping myself. Our mail should be delivered unopened. Don't take anything, especially my rights, for granted. This “facility” is my “home”. Please show respect and knock on the door before entering my room. The ombudsman program has helped me become more knowledgeable and understand everyone's rights. My goal is to advocate and educate as time goes on.”

Darryl: “Support is important regarding resident rights. Privacy is #1. Please knock before entering.”

Janet: “To be heard is imperative to those who, at times, are more vulnerable than others. Having the right to speak freely is dignifying and empowering. That level of respect encourages cohesion between and among residents, staff and caretakers.”

Patricia: “Never forget how far you've come. All the times you pushed on even when you felt you couldn't. All the mornings you got out of bed no matter how hard it was. All the times you wanted to give up but fought through another day. Never forget the strength you've gained along the way.”

Betty: “The ombudsman program has helped us learn how to make our voice heard, help ourselves, and help others. Good, better, best. Never shall you rest until your good becomes better, your better becomes your best.”

THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA)

What is it?

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is a federal law enacted in the United States to support and provide services to older adults aged 60 and older.

Why do we have it?

The OAA was created to address older American's social and economic needs, promote their well-being, and help them maintain independence and dignity as they age. It aims to enhance the quality of life for older adults by providing various services and supports.

When did it begin?

The Older Americans Act was first enacted in 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's “Great Society” program.

How does it work?

Under the OAA, a network of local and state agencies on aging and nonprofit organizations receives funding to deliver essential services to older adults. These services are designed to help older adults remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible, contributing to an improved quality of life.

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THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA)

What is the connection between OAA and the LTCOP?

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is a crucial component of the OAA. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, mandated and funded by the Older Americans Act, is vital in advocating for residents' rights and well-being in long-term care and assisted living facilities.

By addressing the needs and concerns of older adults in long-term care and assisted living settings, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program contributes to the broader objectives of the Older Americans Act, which is to support and enhance the well-being of older Americans and help them live with independence and dignity.

The Nursing Home Reform Act: Elevating Care and Resident Rights

The Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987, also known as the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1987, is a pivotal federal law in the United States that significantly improved standards in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. Its primary aim was to enhance the quality of care for residents while upholding their rights.

One key provision of the Act requires nursing homes to provide services that support residents' physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being. This includes creating individualized care plans tailored to each resident's unique needs and regularly updating them to adapt to changing requirements.

The Act places a strong emphasis on residents' rights within these facilities. It reinforces their entitlement to dignity, respect, and active participation in care decisions. Privacy, including personal living spaces and medical information, is safeguarded. Residents are protected from abuse, neglect, and restraints, with the right to file complaints if these rights are violated. The Act also ensures residents can receive visits from loved ones and facilitates access to communication devices.

In addition to resident rights, the Act sets staffing requirements to meet residents' needs, with recent recommendations further emphasizing staffing levels. The Act mandates training and competency standards for staff, and facilities must undergo regular inspections to maintain certification and adhere to regulations.

The Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987 aimed to improve care quality and residents' quality of life by establishing clear standards, preserving residents' rights, and holding facilities accountable. It recognizes that residents' rights are fundamental to maintaining their dignity, autonomy, and overall well-being in long-term care settings.

Why are the OAA and NHRA important to LTC Ombudsmen?

The Legal Framework of the OAA and the NHRA outlines the rights and protections of older adults in long-term care facilities. Ombudsmen must be familiar with these laws to ensure that residents receive the rights and services to which they are entitled. These laws provide the foundation for protecting the rights and well-being of older adults in long-term care facilities.



BOOK REVIEW:

Successful Aging by Rowe & Kahn

In **Successful Aging**, the authors Rowe and Kahn challenge the notion that aging inevitably brings decline. They present a triad of essential components for successful aging: averting disease and disability, maintaining cognitive and physical vigor, and active life engagement.



The book underscores the pivotal role of lifestyle choices and preventive measures. Regular physical activity and a diet rich in fruits and vegetables are essential for preserving physical health. Avoiding smoking and moderating alcohol intake are emphasized.

Cognitive stimulation is crucial. Engaging in mentally challenging activities preserves cognitive function. Maintaining a strong social network and participating in meaningful activities provide emotional support and purpose.

Health screenings and preventive healthcare are promoted for early disease detection and management. Rowe and Kahn's message is clear: Aging doesn't have to mean decline. By embracing a healthy lifestyle and proactive healthcare, individuals can enhance their "health span" and enjoy more years of vitality and independence.

BOOK CRITIQUE

Successful Aging by Rowe and Kahn offers a perspective on aging that challenges stereotypes and pessimistic views of growing older. It argues that successful aging is achievable through lifestyle choices and preventive measures, emphasizing the importance of physical activity, a healthy diet, cognitive stimulation, social engagement, and proactive healthcare.

What do you think about Rowe & Kahn's idea of successful aging? What about the man injured on his job at age 52, left a double amputee, unable to work, and dependent only on disability? Yet, now at 77, he enjoys a happy marriage and loving children and grandchildren. He is popular in his neighborhood and active in his men's social organization. Family and friends love and respect him. Is that successful aging? It is to him.



Coffee & Cases

Ombuds attending each monthly Coffee & Cases receive 1.5 hours of in-service training credit. By participating in all Coffee & Cases, ombuds can receive their 18 hours of credit needed annually.



Mark your calendars for the first Monday of each month

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

On the first Monday of each month, ombuds across the state come together virtually to discuss cases and get input from each other. Some months, we have special guests.

Be sure to add 1.5 hours of State-sponsored in-service training in LORS each month.

Please send your ideas for discussion topics and suggestions for guest speakers.

LOUISIANA LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDS

Louisiana Ombuds advocate for 35,000 residents in 400 nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

ALEXANDRIA REGION, Cenla AAA

Coordinator: Carolyn Smith
Ombud: Rose Waguespack

BATON ROUGE REGION, Capital AAA

Coordinator: Peggy Essick
Ombuds: Mavis Lee, Anne Miller, Alrina Ponville, Glenda Teagle

LAFAYETTE REGION, Cajun AAA

Coordinator: Dana Adams
Ombud: Nanette Burch

LAKE CHARLES REGION, Calcasieu COA

Coordinator: Charles Campbell
Ombud: Toya Guillory

MONROE REGION, Cenla AAA

Coordinator: Anna Horne
Ombud: La'Trichelle "Lockie" Chisley

NEW ORLEANS REGION, Capital AAA

Coordinator: Tanya Hayes
Ombuds: Barbara Soniat, Beverly Gianna
Volunteer Ombuds: Cecile Gordon, Laurie Holland, Gary Boye, Vickie Castay, Briana Smith

SHREVEPORT REGION, Caddo COA

Coordinator: Casandra Cesare
Ombuds: Beverly Parker, Lucinda Thornton, Beverly Jones, Reta Stewart, Ollie Gaskin
Volunteer Ombud: Sandy Bourgeois

Recruit a volunteer

Research shows that volunteering has many biological and psychosocial benefits:

- Helps stay physically and mentally active
- Reduces stress
- Make new friends and contacts
- Increases social and relationship skills
- Adds job skills
- Increases self-esteem and life-satisfaction
- Increases the level of happiness
- It's Fun!

WHERE DO I FIND VOLUNTEERS?

In nursing homes | visiting family and friends

In neighborhoods | people we know

In the community | through public speaking and media interviews

The Louisiana Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program offers many volunteer opportunities for people within the state. Volunteer-certified ombuds positions are needed, but there are other opportunities to serve, such as a photographer, contributor to this newsletter and other communication vehicles, and tech-savvy volunteers willing to teach residents how to email, text, and Zoom. Bring your ideas and talent to the table and apply to volunteer!

Click on these links for information on how residents in one Louisiana nursing home volunteer to help their fellow residents.

<https://youtu.be/IA6fLusNFc>

To access information on volunteering with the LTCOP, follow these easy steps:

- ▶ Click on the following link: <https://goea.la.gov>.
- ▶ Once on the website, navigate to the Louisiana Ombudsman Program section.
- ▶ Scroll down the page to find the video that provides an enjoyable overview of volunteering with the LTCOP.

To apply as a volunteer, use the online application provided, which is quick and easy to complete.

HAVE A QUESTION OR COMMENT?

What's happening in your region?

Share tips, information, and success stories in your region to include in this newsletter.

Email: StateOmbudsman@la.gov

Call: (504) 782-6640

goea.la.gov/ombudsman