



# OMBUDS BULLETIN

January 2022  
Volume 2

“You are never too old to  
set another goal or to  
dream a new dream.”

*C.G. Lewis*

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

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

## KUDOS TO OMBUDS

*Happy 2022*



2021 was one of the most challenging years for any long-term care ombudsman program. Some state programs count hundreds among their number. Our Ombuds program may be small in numbers, but our impact is forceful. Twenty-three ombuds (staff and volunteers) throughout Louisiana advocate for more than 35,000 residents in approximately 400 nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Louisiana ombuds helped residents transition from nursing homes to independent living, assisted them to self-advocate, and helped residents resolve issues.

I want to acknowledge the ombuds who celebrate anniversaries this quarter:

- CHRIS DECUIR - VOLUNTEER (2017)
- LAURIE HOLLAND - VOLUNTEER (2017)
- CINDY NOLAND (2019)
- SUSAN CULPEPPER - VOLUNTEER (2020)
- BEVERLY PARKER (2020)
- WILL PERCY - VOLUNTEER (2020)



Thank you, again, for all the good you do for so many.  
Rosa Walton  
State Ombudsman

## AAA + LTCOP = SUCCESS FOR LOUISIANA'S OLDER PEOPLE

The Older Americans Act (OAA) requires that every state have a long-term care ombudsman program. Federal law requires AREA AGENCIES ON AGING (AAA) to consult with and support the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs.

The Louisiana AAAs “sponsor, fund and coordinate local ombudsman programs; develop citizen organizations around long-term care issues; encourage long-term care ombudsman training on local levels; envision a network of volunteers and paid staff to participate in the ombudsman program throughout the state.”

(Louisiana Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program training manual, GOEA, 2019)

## A MEDICARE TIP FROM BERYL

For clients with or without Medicare Part D: If your prescription drug costs are a burden, especially in the coverage gap, call your nearest AAA or Council on Aging and ask about the Louisiana SeniorRx Program. This is a statewide, free, low-cost prescription drug program that obtains drugs through drug manufacturers' patient assistance programs, and other sources. SeniorRx also provides free Medicare counseling from SHIP (Senior Health Insurance Improvement Program, LA Dept. Ins.) trained counselors and free Medicare Part D plan comparisons.



**Beryl Mitchell, SeniorRx Intake/Outreach Specialist • 225-287-7414 • [bmitchell@capitalaaa.org](mailto:bmitchell@capitalaaa.org)**

## HELPING RESIDENTS THROUGH OLAP



Ombudsman Legal Assistance Program (OLAP) helps ombudsmen help residents. It is a free service. OLAP contracts with Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS). Shirnell Jackson is the face of OLAP.

Shirnell handles all legal requests from ombudsmen on behalf of nursing home residents statewide. She reports that in 2021, OLAP handled over 50 involuntary discharges, notarized 14 documents, and had three Medicaid appeal requests. What kept her the busiest were emergency involuntary discharges where residents had been discharged at hospitals or unsafe locations.

If you need OLAP assistance, email [sjackson@slls.org](mailto:sjackson@slls.org)  
or call 504-529-1000 ext. 256.

## 2022 EVENTS TO REMEMBER

- APRIL:** National Volunteer Month  
*April 17-23* National Volunteerism Week
- MAY:** Older Americans Month
- SEPTEMBER:** Healthy Aging Month
- OCTOBER:** Residents' Rights Month

*“Getting old is like climbing a mountain; you get a little out of breath, but the view is much better!”*

*Ingrid Bergman*



## KNOW THE ANSWER?

**Q.** When can an ombudsman attend a residents' council meeting?

**A.** When and only when invited by the residents. An ombudsman can do ONLY what the resident wants the ombudsman to do, to say. An ombudsman does not enter a resident's room without knocking and asking permission of the resident.

An ombudsman does not attend any meeting or join in any conversation unless invited by the resident.

## COFFEE & CASES

*All ombuds participating in Coffee & Cases can receive up to 18 credit hours annually.*



**Mark your calendars for the first Monday of each month 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

Coffee & Cases, via Zoom, offers an excellent and easily accessible platform for Ombuds – new volunteers and seasoned staff – to discuss issues and problems. The LTCOP is appreciative to the notable professionals who have joined Coffee & Cases as guest speakers. Speakers will continue to be invited to join C&C, alternating with months devoted specifically to ombuds discussion of particular questions and concerns.

*Some questions addressed during C&C...:*

- Does a nurse have to knock before entering a resident's room? Even if the door is open?*
- Where do our duties as ombudsmen end and other programs begin?*
- How to effectively deal with an administrator or DON who attempt to keep ombudsmen from advocating?*

# VOLUNTEER OMBUDDIES

**HELPING OTHERS** – That’s what our volunteers do.

“I am not only a fierce advocate for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, but I am also an equally fierce advocate for volunteerism,” says Tanya Hayes, 14-year Ombuds Veteran and Regional Coordinator for the New Orleans Region.

Tanya has five certified volunteer ombuds on her team and will soon add a sixth. Tanya often says that “I have a better comfort level knowing our volunteers actively engage with residents at their facilities. Volunteers visit facilities more frequently, get to know the residents, and are keenly alert to residents’ concerns. While volunteers help residents in particular, they are a vital element of the long-term care ombudsman program in general, bringing fresh ideas, new skillsets, and diverse perspectives to keep the program strong and growing.”



L-R: Susan Culpepper, Cecile Gordon, Laurie Holland, Chris DeCuir  
Seated: Will Percy



Tanya Hayes,  
Ombudsman  
Regional Coordinator,  
New Orleans Region

## 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 Cindy Noland

### 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 Patricia Broussard (Welcome Back!)

### LAKE CHARLES REGION, Calcasieu COA

Coordinator Charles Campbell

### 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 Susan Culpepper, Christine DeCuir,  
Cecile Gordon, Laurie Holland, Will Percy

### SHREVEPORT REGION, Caddo COA

Coordinator Casandra Cesare  
Ombuds Beverly Parker, Lucinda Thornton,  
Rachelle Linnear

## RECRUIT A VOLUNTEER

### WE GROW THROUGH OUR VOLUNTEERS BECAUSE THEY

- Empower us to do more
- Reduce the burden on paid staff so staff can expand their efforts
- Increase awareness of our program
- Bring fresh, additional skillsets
- Bring energy and synergy
- Help us so we all can do more for others

### 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

## HAVE A QUESTION OR COMMENT?

What’s happening in your region?

Email: [StateOmbudsman@la.gov](mailto:StateOmbudsman@la.gov)

Call: (504) 782-6640

[GOEA.LA.GOV/OMBUDSMANFORMS](http://GOEA.LA.GOV/OMBUDSMANFORMS)