

OMBUDS BULLETIN

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

September 2025

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

Louisiana Increases Personal Needs Allowance for Medicaid Nursing Home Residents

Effective July 1, 2025, Louisiana increased the Personal Care Needs Allowance (PCNA) for Medicaid-covered nursing home residents from \$38 to \$45 per month. This allowance helps cover items such as snacks, toiletries, and other essentials not provided by the facility or covered by Medicaid.

The Optional State Supplement (OSS) – a state-funded amount provided to certain residents—also rose from \$8 to \$15 per month. This long-overdue change means residents can keep more of their income for personal use, making it easier to meet daily needs and maintain dignity. Advocates have long noted that the \$38 allowance had not kept pace with rising costs, making this update an important step toward improving quality of life for low-income seniors in long-term care.

What is Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)?

A PNA is the small portion of income Medicaid nursing home residents can keep each month to pay for personal expenses such as clothing, snacks, cell phone bills, and other everyday items. Any income above this allowance goes toward the cost of care.

“The federal minimum Personal Needs Allowance hasn’t increased since 1987 and is still only \$30 a month.”

While states may set higher amounts, PNAs currently range from \$30 to \$200 per month, leaving many residents nationwide with only \$2–\$3 per day for discretionary spending. Louisiana’s recent increase to \$45 per month, along with the OSS rising to \$15, brings residents a much-needed boost in dignity and independence.

Upcoming Events

Coffee & Cases:

First Monday of the month, 9:30–11:00am

- **September 8** – Michelle Lovitt, ARCH Housing: A New Model for Aging at Home
- **October 6** – Casandra Cesare, Shreveport Ombudsman Coordinator & Nancy Jobe, Acentra Health – What to do when Medicare-covered care is ending too soon
- **November 3** – Save the Date!

A Doorway to Home

At Audubon Retirement Village, personalized door designs spark memories, aid wayfinding, and make life feel more like home.

At Audubon Retirement Village, Administrator Andrew St. Pierre introduced a creative project to make residents feel more at home. Activities Director Shannon Alexander leads the program, inviting residents to choose the style of their door. Some select a photograph of the front door from their former home, applied as a full-size wrap; others pick a design they simply like best. This personal touch helps with wayfinding, sparks memories, and makes daily life feel more like home.



PNA by state chart

Even a small increase in the Personal Needs Allowance can make a big difference for residents. Extra dollars each month often go toward items that foster dignity and autonomy—like a haircut or fresh fruit.

[Click here to see the PNA Factsheet](#)

Ombudsman Refresher: Do You Know?

Familiar surroundings—like the look of a doorway—can trigger positive emotional, cognitive, and psychological responses in older adults, especially those with memory changes. Small environmental cues can promote comfort, orientation, and a sense of belonging.

Tips for Ombuds

When touring a facility, look for small details that reflect resident choice—personalized doors, menu options, music, activity calendars. These cues reveal whether residents’ voices are shaping daily life according to their preferences.

Submit any questions, suggestions, or case examples you’d like to share to the State Office at StateOmbudsman@la.gov.