

Ombuds Bulletin

LOUISIANA LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

September 2026 • Monthly Issue

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

Sometimes Advocacy Begins With Observation

Residents do not always tell us when something is wrong. Sometimes the first clue comes from simply paying attention.

On a visit, take a moment to notice:

- Is the resident able to reach the call light?
- Are glasses, hearing aids, mobility devices and personal belongings within reach?
- Does the resident appear comfortable and appropriately dressed?
- Is there privacy during personal care and conversations?
- Are residents being spoken with, rather than spoken about?
- Does the resident seem comfortable expressing a preference or concern?

None of these observations automatically means there is a problem. They are invitations to look a little closer, listen a little longer and, when appropriate, ask:

“How are things going for you?”

Good advocacy often begins with noticing what others may overlook.

RESIDENT SAFETY

Bed Rails: Safety Device or Safety Risk?

A portable bed rail may look like a simple safety measure, but it can also present risks.

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care recently highlighted concerns about portable bed rails, including the potential for serious injury.

Unlike rails integrated into some hospital-style beds, portable rails are added to an existing bed and can create spaces where a person may become trapped.

For ombudsmen, the important issue is not simply whether a bed rail is present. Look a little deeper.

- Why is it being used?
- Does the resident know it is there?
- Has the resident been included in the decision?
- Is the resident able to get in and out of bed safely?
- Could the rail restrict the resident's movement?
- Have safer alternatives been considered?

Something intended to protect a resident should never be assumed to be safe simply because it is called a safety device.

Source: National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, The Voice, August 2026

COFFEE & CASES Monday, September 14 • 9:30 AM

Shirnell Jackson, OLAP Attorney • Powers of Attorney — authority, limitations and the resident's voice • **Cameras in Residents' Rooms** — rights, privacy and consent • **Cannabis in Nursing Homes** — recent Louisiana legislation and what it may mean for residents and facilities. **Bring your coffee — and bring your questions.**

HAVING EACH OTHER'S BACK

The Belay

In climbing, a belay means knowing someone is there as you make the climb — connected to you, paying attention and holding the rope for support if you lose your footing.

That is also a fitting picture of this ombudsman team.

Ombudsmen call one another, share what they are seeing, ask “What do you think?”, check on colleagues handling difficult situations and share experience when it may help.

That isn't doing someone else's work.

It's having each other's back while they do it.

And that is one of the strengths of this team.

We're in this together.

Connected.
Attentive.
Supportive.



Connected, attentive, supportive — a fitting picture of teamwork.

TRY THIS QUESTION

“Tell me more about that.”

Sometimes a resident begins to say something and then stops.

Sometimes the concern sounds small.

Sometimes the first version of a story isn't really the whole story.

Before moving to the next question, try five simple words:

“Tell me more about that.”

Then wait.

A little silence can give a resident the space to decide what they really want to say.

REMEMBER

The Resident Comes First

An ombudsman doesn't have to arrive with every answer.

Listen.

Notice.

Ask.

Follow the resident's lead.

And when something isn't clear, look a little deeper.

“What does the resident want?”