

October is Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Month

[The Georgia State Long-Term Care Ombudsman](#) (LTCO) program is a proud advocate of the rights of residents in long-term care facilities. In 2012, staff members resolved the majority of more than 4,000 complaints investigated in nursing and personal care homes located in the state.

October is Long-term Care Residents' Rights Month, a celebration and focus on the dignity, respect and value of long-term care residents. Federal law guarantees nursing home residents' individual rights to long-term care residents including the right to: individualized care, respect, dignity, visitation, privacy, and the making of independent choices.

LTCO has promoted residents' rights in long-term care facilities since 1979. A staff of 49 paid and approximately 90 volunteers advocate for residents in every facility in Georgia's 159 counties. LTCOs are required to make quarterly visits to each of Georgia's 369 nursing homes and 1,913 personal care homes.

Many residents do not have family or regular visitors. LTCO staff steps in to observe interactions between facility staff and residents. LTCO staff works to ensure residents get respectful treatment; timely answering of call lights; access to appropriate meals and assistance with eating; access to preferred activities; and much more.

Facilities must display a poster with LTCO contact information to make it easier for residents and family to seek help. LTCO provides confidentiality unless the resident otherwise gives permission. With permission, LTCO discusses the resident's concerns with the facility management and works toward a resolution that is satisfactory to the resident.

In the 2012 fiscal year, Georgia's ombudsmen:

- Investigated 2,836 complaints in nursing facilities, 73 percent of which were fully or partially resolved to the satisfaction of the resident.
- Investigated 1,400 complaints in personal care homes, 64 percent of which were fully or partially resolved to the satisfaction of the resident.
- Conducted 103 presentations to 2,831 nursing facility and other long-term care facility staff.
- Attended 194 resident council meetings, assisting 2,600 persons, and attended 16 family council meetings, assisting 197 persons.

Long-Term Care Facilities include nursing homes, personal care homes, assisted living communities, community living arrangements and intermediate care facilities for the mentally retarded.



Melanie McNeil, msmcneil@dhr.state.ga.us
Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Division of Aging Services
Department of Human Services
2 Peachtree Street, N.W., 33rd Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 866-552-4464 • Fax (404) 463-8384