

Advocating for Quality of Life in Long-Term Care Settings: During the Pandemic and Beyond

Salli Pung, State Long Term Care Ombudsman



Michigan's LTC Ombudsman Program

- * Program of the Michigan Advocacy Program
 - * State office currently has 5.7 full time employees
 - * 19 local ombudsmen across the state (16.7 FTEs)
 - * 30 volunteer/student intern ombudsmen
- * Services provided to LTC residents
 - * 450 nursing homes serving 47,500 residents
 - * 4,500 Adult Foster Care & Homes for the Aged serving 55,000 residents

What LTC Ombudsmen Do

- * Promote high quality of care and quality of life
- * Explain resident rights to residents, families, and staff
- * Empower residents to communicate concerns
- * Assist residents in resolving their concerns
- * Advocate for residents and their families
- * Provide education on long term care issues
- * Promote use of best practices
- * Inform systemic change through state and federal advocacy

How the Work is Done

- * Geo-routed toll-free number (posted in nursing homes)
- * Ombudsmen visit licensed nursing homes at least quarterly and also to investigate complaints
- * Program is notified of complaint surveys and involuntary discharges by state survey agency which generates cases
- * Detailed case work and other services are entered in Ombudsman database
- * **Strict confidentiality** – must have resident consent to act

Impact of COVID 19

- * Program suspended in-person visits on March 13th
 - * Work provided over the phone or through virtual visits
 - * Virtual visits don't work for some residents
 - * Released guidance to resume in-person visits in August
- * Sharp increase in call volume
 - * 95% increase in calls from April – June 2020 compared to same time previous year
 - * Isolation concerns, care issues, staffing shortages, lack of PPE, visitation and clarification on restrictions

Response to COVID 19

- * Host weekly Resident and Family Calls
 - * Provide updates on Executive Orders, guidance from CDC, MDHHS, LARA and CMS
 - * Answer questions from participants and share stories
- * Advocating for Quality of Life for Residents
 - * Provided recommendations to MDHHS staff leading the COVID response on multiple issues
 - * Weekly calls with the Aging and Adult Services Administration to relay the resident experience

Quality of Life Workgroup Recommendations

- * Allowing outdoor visits
- * Allowing small-group, non-contact activities
- * Allowing limited communal dining
- * Indoor visitation participation opt-in
- * Resident small group "pod" opt-in
- * Increase virtual visitation opportunities
- * Staff access to creative engagement ideas

Quality of Life Workgroup Recommendations

- * Support for meaningful engagement activities
- * Designating ancillary service providers as essential
- * Engage visitation volunteers
- * Support for residents attending off-campus health and wellness visits
- * Allowing window visits
- * Clarifying June 30, 2020 Epidemic Order

Questions?



Contact Information

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Contact a local ombudsman

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