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## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

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### **State Dept on Aging Praise Residents and Staff of Long Term Care Facilities in Observance of Nursing Home Week**

#### *Ombudsmen Program protects standard of care to improve residents' quality of life*

**SPRINGFIELD – May 14, 2013.** In observance of *National Nursing Home Week*, Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director John K. Holton, Ph.D., praises long term care advocates and caregivers. *National Nursing Home Week*, as deemed by the American Health Care Association, runs the week after Mother's Day to honor residents, family members, staff and volunteers who help nursing home residents. This year's awareness week that runs through May 18, stresses that residents should feel satisfied and staff should feel they have contributed in a meaningful way.

"I commend the families and friends, advocates and facility staff who make sure residents of long term care facilities are treated with dignity, their privacy is respected and other human rights are maintained to enhance their quality of life," said Director Holton.

The Illinois Department on Aging works on behalf of older adults to help them live independently and remain in their homes and communities, and advocates for older adults who require additional support and have moved into nursing homes. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program protects and promotes the rights as well as quality of life for people who reside in nursing homes. Regional ombudsmen have a hands-on working relationship with the nursing home residents and staff of the facilities.

State Ombudsman Sally Petrone says a nursing home should be a safe, supportive and caring environment for residents. "The numbers are growing of older adults who need assistance. Ombudsmen develop relationships with the residents and often serve as a go-between with family or staff. This assistance can make a positive difference in their everyday lives."

This year's *National Nursing Home Week* theme is "Team Care" which emphasizes the value of care planning where everyone pitches in for optimal outcomes. It is an opportunity to involve families, youth, and others in a community to show support and respect for the individuals living in long term care facilities and the staff who provide care and support services. Find out more about *National Nursing Home Week* on to the American Health Care Association website at: [http://www.ahcancal.org/events/national\\_nursing\\_home\\_week/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ahcancal.org/events/national_nursing_home_week/Pages/default.aspx).

For more information about program services to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, including the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, call the IDoA Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327, or log on to the website at [www.state.il.us/aging](http://www.state.il.us/aging).

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