The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment in program activities in any of its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

Elder Abuse Hotline: 866-800-1409

1-866-800-1409

State of Illinois
Department on Aging
One Natural Resources Way, #100
Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
Senior HelpLine: 1-800-252-8966

The recommendation from the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is to amend the Illinois Nursing Home Care Act to require referral to the Illinois Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program when a nursing home resident reports a complaint.

The bill was referred to the House Rules Committee. The Committee tabled the bill. The bill was not brought up for a vote in the House. The Illinois Ombudsman testified against the introduction in the 2017 session.

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Ombudsman Providers for both Areas. At the onset of the impasse, the State Ombudsman moved forward with recruitment and training for future Ombudsman Providers.

The Ombudsman program continued to move forward with the development of a Network of Ombudsman Providers. The Network of Ombudsman Providers is designed to ensure that every long-term care facility in Illinois has access to an Ombudsman provider.

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Volunteerism

Due to the lack of paid volunteer coordinators, Volunteerism has been severely impacted. Many program sponsors have had to eliminate Volunteer coordinators. Some programs have even gone so far as to eliminate the role of Volunteer Coordinator. Most of the Regional Ombudsman Programs have had to fill the role of the Volunteer Coordinator. The number of regular presence visits made by Volunteerism has diminished in some programs due to the lack of paid volunteer coordinators. Volunteerism: regular presence visits made by Volunteerism has diminished in some programs due to the lack of paid volunteer coordinators.

Barriers and Challenges

• Budget Impasse: Two Regional Ombudsman Program Provider Fund as it has in years past.

Home Care Ombudsman Program

Beginning in FY2014 and continuing into FY2016, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program expanded its services to include advocacy for seniors and persons with disabilities who live in the community and receive managed care services through the Medicare-Medicaid Alignment Initiative (MMA) or who live in the community and receive Medicaid waiver services. Funding for this expansion came from two main sources: a federal grant through the Duals Demonstration Program, state funds, as well as Balancing Incentive Program (BIP) funds. The total expansion funding for FY2016 was $1,867,242.

Legislative Advocacy

The nursing home industry introduced HB 5601 that would no longer allow anonymous callers to file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Public Health against a long-term care facility. The State Ombudsman worked with various legislators and advocacy groups as well as the Illinois Department on Aging to prevent this legislation from passing. The State Ombudsman testified against the bill in front of the House of Representatives, and was interviewed and quoted in various news articles, including U.S. News and World Report. The bill did not pass. Another legislative issue the Ombudsman began to work on in FY16 was improper discharge reform. The Office identified significant concerns with improper evictions from long-term care facilities and worked closely with the Alzheimer’s Association and other advocacy groups to prepare a bill for introduction in the 2017 session.

Statewide Plan

The Ombudsman Program’s statewide plan focused on promotion of long-term care rebalancing and reform.

Complaints and Consultations

The Ombudsman Program handled 7,828 complaints during FY2016. Of those, 4,670 nursing facility complaints, 5,063 complaints were verified. There were 1,216 Assisted Living and Shared Housing Establishments, Supportive Living, and Short-Term and Respite Care complaints. Of 185 complaints were verified. Of 42 cases in the “other settings” category, 35 were verified. Of all complaints, 5,078 were resolved or partially resolved to the satisfaction of the resident or complainant. There are 133 possible codes used for documenting complaints into the National Ombudsman Resource System. By far, the largest single complaint investigated by the Illinois Ombudsman Program was related to improper involuntary discharges. The Program investigated:

• 911 Complaints of Improper Discharges
• 434 Complaints of Exercise of Preference/Choice and/or Civil/Religious Rights
• 402 Complaints of Financial Exploitation or Neglect from Individuals Outside of the Facility
• 398 Complaints Relating to Information Regarding Rights, Benefits, Services and the Resident’s Right to Complain

Money Follows the Person

The Ombudsman Program continued its push to be visible in Illinois long-term care facilities. Ombudsman made 17,492 regular presence visits to 1,519 long-term care facilities. There were 139,427 beds in long-term care facilities in Illinois during FY2016.

Long-Term Care Systems Rebalancing

The Ombudsman Program continued to receive funds to assist with education and referrals to help residents transition out of nursing homes and into community based arrangements through the Money Follows the Person Program (MFP). Illinois was awarded the MFP Demonstration Project in May of 2007 from the Federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). MFP supports states in creating systems and services to transition long-stay Medicaid-eligible persons residing in institutional settings to appropriate home and community based settings (HCBS).

Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report

Funding

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

In FY2016, the budget for the Ombudsman Program totaled $4,306,135. The largest portion of funds supporting the program came from federal funding totaling $2,669,516. The Program received $1,188,838 in state funds while local funding for the program totaled $447,781. However, the program did not receive funding from the Long-Term Care Provider Fund as it has in years past.

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Barriers and Challenges

Budget Impasse:

Two Regional Ombudsman Program Provider Agencies withdrew from the Program due to concerns with the state’s budget impasse. Other programs were forced to let go of staff. The State Ombudsman designated new Ombudsman Providers for both Areas. At the onset of the impasse, the State Ombudsman