



Long-Term Care Planning Conference





Alabama's
Long-Term Care
MBUDSMAN
working together for quality care



History of the LTC Ombudsman Program

- ▶ Began in 1972 under the authorization of the Older Americans Act of 1965.
- ▶ Initially created to address issues of abuse and neglect in skilled nursing homes.
- ▶ Mission was expanded to include the identifying, investigating, and resolving of complaints made by and on behalf of residents.
- ▶ Required each state to have an Office of the State LTC Ombudsman to be headed by a full-time State LTC Ombudsman for the purpose of addressing specific issues in each state.
- ▶ Outside of a full-time State LTC Ombudsman in each state, the LTC Ombudsman Program was, in the 1970s, volunteer-driven but has since expanded to include full-time ombudsman representatives who serve as representatives of the State Ombudsman.

Who is the current State LTC Ombudsman for Alabama?

Virginia Moore-Bell

Phone# (877) 425-2243 or

(334) 242-5753

What is a LTC Ombudsman or ombudsman representative?

- ▶ In Alabama, the Office of the State LTC Ombudsman contracts with Area Agencies on Aging to provide local and community-based ombudsman services (some states contract with private agencies). There are 13 Agencies on Aging in the State of Alabama.
- ▶ Ombudsman representatives for each Area Agency on Aging have a designated number of counties to cover and serve as advocates for Long-Term Care residents in those counties.
- ▶ Residents in every county in the United States have a local ombudsman representative to advocate for them.
- ▶ All ombudsman representatives have oversight authority (not regulatory authority) in that they act as representatives of the Office of the State LTC Ombudsman.

What are the main roles of a M4A ombudsman representative?

- ▶ Identify, investigate, and, when possible, resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents to the satisfaction of the resident or the resident's legal representative.
- ▶ Conduct routine visits by visiting skilled nursing facilities and assisted-living facilities on a periodic basis.
- ▶ M4A ombudsman representatives educate residents' family members and facility staff members on Resident Rights.
- ▶ M4A ombudsman representatives are a resource for those needing LTC guidance.
- ▶ M4A ombudsman representatives help promote the Medicaid Waiver Program called Gateway to Community Living.

Receiving Complaints

- **Anyone can call the M4A ombudsman representative to voice a complaint such as the resident, legal representative, family member, friend, or staff.**
- **Common complaints include: food, missing or lost items, slow response to call lights or requests for assistance, not receiving medication, poor care, unsanitary conditions, not being able to leave the facility and/or exercising the right to make personal choices, staff attitudes, low staffing levels, abuse and/or neglect, and inappropriate and involuntary discharge.**

Investigating Complaints

Investigating complaints can involve collecting relevant documentation such as signed release forms and medical records and interviewing individuals such as residents, family members, and staff.

Complaint Resolution

The M4A ombudsman representative works to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the resident or the resident's legal representative. This can involve mediation with facility staff on behalf of the resident, attending a care plan meeting, or educating staff on resident rights.

Routine Visits

Federal law mandates that ombudsman representatives must, at a minimum, conduct routine visits to each skilled nursing facility on a quarterly basis and to each assisted-living facility every four months.

M4A Long-term Care Resource

- ▶ M4A ombudsman representatives often receive calls from family members, caregivers, case managers, social workers, and individuals in the community requesting information on the process of getting admitted to a Long-Term Care Facility.
- ▶ The M4A Long-term Care Guide provides a list of LTC facilities in the M4A area, as well as in Jefferson County.



Gateway to Community Living

M4A ombudsman representatives help promote Gateway to Community Living, a Medicaid Waiver program that supports individuals who wish to transition from nursing homes to community living.

Gateway to Community Living (Continued)

- Referrals to Gateway can be made by a resident, a nursing home's social service department, an ombudsman representative, or a resident's legal representative.
- Referrals can be made using Gateway to Community Living's Portal at gclportal.Medicaid.alabama.gov, or by faxing the referral to (334)353-3642, or by email to gclportal@medicaid.alabama.gov, or by mailing it to:

Gateway to Community Living

Alabama Medicaid Agency

P.O. Box 5624

Montgomery, AL 36103-5624

Gateway to Community Living (Continued)

If a resident qualifies, a transition coordinator will work with that resident to find affordable housing, secure the necessary services the resident will need in the community, help with costs related to the move such as rental and utility deposits, provide some financial assistance with purchasing basic supplies, medical supplies, and household furnishings, and provide financial assistance with environmental and vehicle modifications.



Contact Information

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