



## PRESS RELEASE

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### IL Dept on Aging Praises Long-term Care Advocates

#### *Ombudsmen Improve Quality of Life for Nursing Home Residents*

**SPRINGFIELD – May 7, 2011.** Illinois Department on Aging Director Charles D. Johnson says tomorrow's Mother's Day is also the kick off for *National Nursing Home Week*, a weeklong observance to honor the residents, family members, staff and volunteers who help nursing home residents. *National Nursing Home Week*, as deemed by the American Health Care Association, runs May 8 – 14.

"Nursing Home Week is a time to recognize the family members, staff, and advocates who work to make certain that dignity, privacy and other human rights are maintained for the residents living in long-term care settings. The idea is that residents should feel satisfied and staff should feel they have contributed in a meaningful way," said Director Charles D. Johnson.

Ensuring all Illinois nursing home residents are safe and receive the treatment appropriate for their condition is one of Governor Pat Quinn's top priorities. The Governor convened the Nursing Home Safety Task Force and, based on its recommendations to reform long-term care in Illinois, Governor Quinn signed legislation that raised the standard of care for nursing homes.

The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA), which advocates on behalf of older adults to help them live independently and remain in their own homes and communities, also has a program to assist older adults who have moved into nursing homes and need added support. 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 they take time to develop relationships with residents, but more is needed. "Family and friends should visit their loved ones in nursing homes. A vast majority of residents rarely have visitors. A short 30 minute visit not only lifts their spirit and brightens their day, it gives them the comfort, love and hope that everyone needs."

The theme of this year's *National Nursing Home Week* observance is "Fulfilling the Promise" which is about adding value to life and living life to its fullest potential. Those who are "Fulfilling the Promise" by serving others, are helping to overcome many of the infirmities of age and disability. For more information about this year's *National Nursing Home Week*, log 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, call the IDoA Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

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