



421 East Capitol Avenue, #100, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1789
Phone: 217-785-3356, Fax: 217-785-4477, Web: www.state.il.us/aging

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 14, 2011

CONTACT:

Kimberly Parker - 312.814.1577

State Calls Attention to the Residents of Long-Term Care in Observance of *Residents Rights Month*

Department on Aging program protects and defends residents rights

SPRINGFIELD – October 14, 2011. Illinois Department on Aging Acting Director Michael Gelder says the state advocates for more than 120,000 residents of long term care facilities, including nursing homes and assisted-living facilities, in Illinois. Director Gelder's comment refers to this month's Residents' Rights observance. The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care started the observance in 1981 as a weeklong highlight on the importance of resident focused care. This year, the observance is extended to the full month of October.

"Residents of long term care facilities are some of the most vulnerable of our communities. We have to make sure the residents get the best care and are treated with dignity. These basic standards ensure the residents' quality of life," said acting director Gelder.

Gelder chaired the Nursing Home Safety Task Force, when, in 2009, Governor Pat Quinn charged the task force with examining state procedures and industry practices in order to ensure all Illinois nursing home residents are safe and receive the treatment appropriate for their condition. The task force's efforts led to historic legislation Senate Bill 326 (Public Act 096-1372) to transform the nursing home system of admission and screening.

In Illinois, the Department of Public Health licenses, regulates and inspects long term care facilities. And the Department on Aging's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program serves as another safeguard. The Ombudsman Program is a resident centered advocacy program which makes every effort to assist, empower, represent, and intervene on behalf of residents in long term care facilities, supportive living facilities, and assisted living and shared housing establishments. The Long Term Care Ombudsmen inform residents and their families of their rights; resolve any complaints or issues; provide information on resident's needs and concerns to their families, facility staff and their community; and provide support for the resident's good individualized care.

In observance of this year's *Residents' Rights Month* theme *Welcome Home: Creating Connections Between Residents and the Community*, the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care challenges the public to think of creative ways to involve long term care residents in the community and to invite the community to visit facilities in the month of October and throughout the year.

In collaboration with long term care associations and advocacy organizations, the Department on Aging worked with the Illinois Attorney General's office to create the *Consumer Choice Information Report*. As per state law, each year, long term care facilities are required to complete the *Consumer Choice Information Report*. To find out more, log on to the IDoA website at www.state.il.us/aging/ccir/index.htm.

For more information about programs and services to help older adults and their families, contact the Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.