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## PRESS RELEASE

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### IL Dept on Aging Praises Long-term Care Advocates in Observance of Nursing Home Week

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

**SPRINGFIELD – May 14, 2012.** Illinois Department on Aging Director John K. Holton, Ph.D., praised advocates and caregivers in observance of *National Nursing Home Week*. This weeklong awareness campaign, as deemed by the American Health Care Association, runs the week after Mother’s Day to honor the residents, family members, staff and volunteers who help nursing home residents.

“The idea of *Nursing Home Week* is that residents should feel satisfied and staff should feel they have contributed in a meaningful way. We commend the family members, volunteers, long term care advocates and facility staff who work to make certain the residents’ dignity, privacy and other human rights are maintained while living in long-term care settings,” said Director Holton.

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 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 they take time to develop relationships with residents, many of whom rarely have visitors. “A 30 minute visit by family and friends does wonders to lift a resident’s spirit and brighten their day.” She says it helps engage the residents, gives them the comfort and hope they need.

The theme of this year’s *National Nursing Home Week* observance is “Celebrating the Journey” which reminds us that every life should be honored, every life’s story needs to be told and that every day we have the chance to begin writing a new chapter. Whether the day is filled with comedy or drama, nursing home residents and caregivers are co-authors and leading characters in each other’s life story. For more information about this year’s *National Nursing Home Week*, log on to the American Health Care Association website at:

[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 Ombudsman Program, 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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