



State of Illinois  
Illinois Department on Aging

# *Assuring Good Care Everywhere*

The Illinois Home & Community Ombudsman Program



## **A Proven Record of Advocacy**

*The Illinois Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is proud to bring more than 30 years of client-directed advocacy to consumers of home- and community-based services.*





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*A main goal of the Home and Community Ombudsman Program is to allow Ombudsmen to advocate for clients to receive appropriate services to reduce the risk of placement in a long-term care facility.*

## Program History

# Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has a long and esteemed history of client-directed advocacy on behalf of consumers of long-term care services.

In the early 1970's, reports of abuse, neglect, and poor care in long-term care facilities receiving Federal dollars through the Medicare and Medicaid programs led to Congressional Hearings and the development of an "Ombudsman" program.



By the 1980's, the Older Americans Act required all states to provide an Ombudsman Program serving residents of long-term care facilities. In 2003, responsibilities of the Illinois Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program were expanded to include advocacy for residents of assisted living facilities, shared housing, sheltered care and supportive living facilities.



# History

Recent efforts to shift care for the elderly from institutional settings to community settings through Home and Community Based Services programs led to the need for advocates to assure that individuals receiving Federally funded care in the community receive quality care and services. With over 30 years in long-term health care advocacy, the Ombudsman Program is uniquely qualified to provide these services. The role of the Ombudsman remains as an independent advocate for consumers of long-term care services, and has always been strengthened by amendments to the Older Americans Act and corresponding changes to the Illinois Act on Aging. The purpose of the program was, and continues to be, to respond to complaints made by or on behalf of consumers of long-term care services.

Recent program expansion now makes it possible to bring ombudsman advocacy services to consumers of Home and Community Based Services. These services will remain essentially the same as previously provided to nursing home residents, but will be expanded to assist older adults and adults with disabilities between ages 18-59 who live in their own homes. We are proud of our history, and look forward to many years of assuring that these individuals receive the best care and services possible.

## Home & Community Ombudsman Services

# Ombudsman

The Illinois Home & Community Ombudsman Program assists and advocates for individuals who are between the ages of 18-59 with physical disabilities, or seniors who are age 60 and above who are enrolled in the Medicare Medicaid Alignment Initiative or are receiving services under a Medicaid waiver to help them stay in their own home.

In order to promote consumer satisfaction with services, the Home & Community Ombudsman Program provides a range of services, including but not limited to:



- providing information about home care and managed care
- promoting access to home care services
- advocating for more long-term care options and quality home and managed care services

# Services

- identifying, investigating and resolving complaints concerning waiver services and managed care organizations
- addressing concerns related to:
  - ◆ managed care plans
  - ◆ service agreements
  - ◆ care plans
  - ◆ care coordination
  - ◆ satisfaction with services
  - ◆ denial or termination of services
  - ◆ caregiver assignments
  - ◆ workers who do not report to work
  - ◆ language barriers

Ombudsmen will have access to participants and their records with permission provided by the participant or the participant's authorized representative.

Ombudsmen will make referrals to Adult Protective Services with proper permission.



## What to Expect

When you call the Illinois Department on Aging Senior HelpLine and ask for the assistance of a Home & Community Ombudsman, the intake worker will refer you to the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. An Ombudsman will offer support and guidance throughout the problem-solving process.



### Illinois Department on Aging Senior HelpLine

Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (CST).

Toll-free within Illinois: 1-800-252-8966 (Voice), 1-888-206-1327 (TTY); Outside of Illinois: (217) 524-6911; Fax: (217) 524-6968;

E-mail: [aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov)

[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)

## Consumer Rights

As a consumer of Home and Community Based Services, your rights are protected by federal and state laws.

If you are a senior or an adult with a disability living in your own home, and are receiving home care assistance or are under a managed care plan, you have the right to:

- ◆ Be treated with dignity and respect at all times.
- ◆ Have assistance to help you understand your rights;
- ◆ Be free from harm, including abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation;
- ◆ Request an investigation if there is theft or loss of your property;
- ◆ Receive treatment and services to help you live at home and be more independent;
- ◆ Receive care from properly trained, licensed or certified staff;

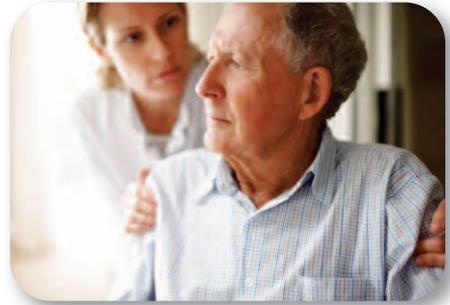


- ◆ Get help with appeals or grievances to exercise your civil and other legal rights;
- ◆ Be protected against discrimination;
- ◆ Have someone help you make informed health care decisions;
- ◆ Have someone help you if you have difficulty with language or communication;
- ◆ Access information about available home care services provided in your community;
- ◆ Choose your own physician, and specialists within your healthcare network;
- ◆ Fully participate or have assistance in making treatment decisions;
- ◆ Participate in making and directing your plan of care;



# Consumer Rights

- ◆ Be informed of the cost of services prior to or while receiving those services;
- ◆ Talk with health care providers in private;
- ◆ Have all of your personal, financial, and medical information kept private;
- ◆ Review, receive copies, or request changes to your medical records;
- ◆ Receive information and assistance on creating advance directives;
- ◆ A full explanation about, and assistance with the complaint and appeals process;
- ◆ Complain about the services or treatment you receive or need;
- ◆ Be protected from retaliation for filing complaints; and
- ◆ To know who to contact for additional information or assistance.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### *What is Medicare?*

Medicare is the federal health insurance program for people who are 65 or older, as well as certain younger people with disabilities.

### *What is Medicaid?*

Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that helps with medical costs for some people with limited income and resources. Medicaid also offers benefits not normally covered by Medicare, like nursing home care and personal care services.

### *What is long-term care?*

Long-term care includes a range of services and supports that you may need to meet your needs. Most long-term care services provide assistance with the basic personal tasks of everyday life such as: assistance with maintaining a home, community errands, medication management, eating, dressing, bathing and other personal tasks as well as institutional nursing home care.



# Asked

## *What are home and community-based services?*

Home and community-based services (also known as waiver services) provide opportunities for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive services that are designed to help them remain in their own home or community. These programs serve a variety of targeted population groups, such as people with mental illnesses, intellectual or developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, and seniors over age 60.

## *What is managed care?*

In the past, Illinois provided Medicaid services using a fee-for-service system. Illinois now uses a managed care delivery system for Medicaid benefits. In a managed care delivery system, recipients receive most or all of their Medicaid services through a private Managed Care Organization (MCO) that contracts with the state of Illinois. The MCO manages recipient care plans, and coordinates services and payments.



## *What is care coordination?*

The Care Coordinator helps older adults, and adults with disabilities determine what their specific needs are, and what

services are available to meet those needs. Care plans are developed through discussion between the participant and the care coordinator or case manager, and include a variety of services and tasks designed to assist seniors and adults with disabilities to remain in their homes. Services range from household tasks such as cleaning, meal preparation, laundry, and shopping to personal care tasks such as dressing, toileting, bathing, grooming and following special diets. Other services may include adult day care, modification to the home and assistive equipment.



### *What is abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation?*

Abuse of the elderly and adults with disabilities is the least recognized form of family violence. Abuse takes many forms, and in most cases victims are subjected to more than one type of mistreatment. The types of abuse can include: physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, confinement, passive neglect, and financial exploitation.

### *What is an Advance Directive?*

An advance directive is a written document that says how you want medical decisions to be made in case you cannot speak for yourself.





State of Illinois  
Department on Aging  
One Natural Resources Way, #100  
Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271

For more information call the Illinois Department on Aging  
**Senior HelpLine** Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. CST.  
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Outside of Illinois: 1-217-524-6911; Fax 217-524-6968;  
Email: [aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov)  
[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)