

Serving residents of long-term care homes in Vanderburgh County



# VOICES VIEWPOINT

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## WHAT IS VOICES?

VOICES, Inc. provides free and confidential Ombudsman services. We are a not-for-profit organization founded in 1980 to address concerns and problems in Evansville nursing homes and licensed assisted living homes. VOICES, Inc. is the only agency in Vanderburgh County dedicated solely to advocate for residents in these homes. Services include investigation of complaints, resolution of problems and protection of resident rights. Additional services include information/training for staff, residents and the general public on long-term care issues—these issues are quality of life, residents’ rights, selection of a home and sources of payment for care.

### AREA-WIDE RESIDENT COUNCIL MEETING



VOICES, Inc. is excited to announce the first area-wide resident council meeting! The meeting will take place on **Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup>**. It will be held at the **Browning Event Room at the Central Library** from

**2:00 to 3:30 p.m.** Doors will open at 1:30 p.m. This will be a gathering of long-term care residents across Vanderburgh County. There will be a short program about your rights, followed by refreshments, bingo and socializing.

Please encourage residents from your home to attend. Also, persuade your Activity Director to add this event to your home’s calendar and make transportation arrangements for those residents who wish to go.

If you have any questions, please call 423-2927.

WHO CONTACTS THE OMBUDSMAN?

- a resident
- a family member
- a friend
- an employee
- anyone

WHY CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN?

Contact the Ombudsman if you have a complaint, problem or concern regarding long-term care.

HOW TO CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN?

Call 423-2927.

# RESIDENT RIGHTS REVIEW

## BASIC RIGHTS

- You have the right to be treated with respect and dignity
- You have the right to have your individuality and preferences recognized
- You have the right to receive quality care and treatment that is free from discrimination
- You have the right to have a relative or legal representative exercise these rights when you are unable to do so

## HURRY! HURRY! HURRY!

Response to our cookbook *Timeless Recipes and Memories* has been overwhelming. The book contains 178 recipes from local long-term care residents. It is an easy to use 3-ring binder with large print, category dividers and a handy book stand.

We only have a few left, so don't miss out! Call 423-2927 to receive your copy for just \$10.00.

Proceeds go to VOICES, Inc. to assist in advocating for long-term care residents in Vanderburgh County.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

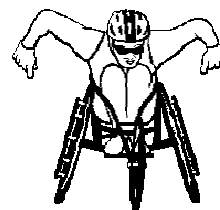
The Vanderburgh County Senior Olympics "Athletes Around the World" is fast approaching! The games will be sponsored by Southwestern Indiana Regional Council on Aging (SWIRCA) for residents of nursing homes and assisted living homes. This will be a wonderful time to get out, socialize, compete and show your strengths. Ring toss, fishing, ball toss, washers and wheelchair races are just a few of the categories available. The top three winners in each Olympic category are awarded medals, so start training now to be in your best shape for the events! Don't forget to show your team spirit by wearing coordinating hats, scarves or other ornaments to set your team out from the rest; make up a team name, cheer or song.

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18TH

9:00 a.m. – residents of assisted living homes

1:00 p.m. – residents of nursing homes

**SEE YOU AT SWIRCA ON THE 18<sup>th</sup>!**



## CULTURE CHANGE MOVEMENT TO CONSISTENT ASSIGNMENTS

As each issue of *VOICES Viewpoint* covers another part of Culture Change, there is no piece more important than consistent assignments. Consistent assignment refers to the same caregiver (RN's, LPN's, CNA's) consistently caring for the same residents at least 85% of their shifts.

Unfortunately, many homes think that using consistent assignment is bad policy. Many homes do not use consistent assignment because they believe it causes problems in the work environment. The home feels if a close relationship develops and the resident passes, the staff member's work will be ineffective. Another reason homes oppose consistent assignment is they prefer all of their staff to be trained on every unit and available everywhere. Also, it is so staff do not get "stuck" with "hard-to-care-for" residents. Many times frequent changes in staff assignment is less of a choice. When there is not enough staff, the home responds by filling the schedule with an available Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). However, research shows consistent assignment increases staff stability.

In reality, using consistent assignment develops relationships. As a result:

- Staff have higher job satisfaction
- Call-ins decrease
- Staff turnover dramatically decreases
- Short staffing happens less often
- Pressure sores decrease
- Residents are happier
- Staff becomes familiar with the residents so their work takes less time and residents receive better care

As you can see, providing consistent assignment is in no way complex. It benefits not only the residents but also the home. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as well as many advocacy groups recognize that consistent assignment is vital to providing the best care and quality of life for the residents. According to the National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform, "residents and their families value the quality of the relationships they have with the frontline caregivers more highly than the quality of the medical care and the quality of the food."




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### MID-AMERICA INSTITUTE ON AGING

Southwestern Indiana Regional Council on Aging (SWIRCA) and the University of Southern Indiana (USI) College of Nursing and Health Professionals are teaming up! They will present the first annual Mid-America Institute on Aging, August 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at the USI campus. This conference is for elders, family members and those professionals who work with and care for elders. Lunch and refreshments will be provided and the location is ADA accessible. National and local presenters will speak on many topics. Register by July 30<sup>th</sup>! The cost for retirees and students is \$30 for one day or \$55 for both days. The cost for all other individuals is \$75 for one day or \$140 for both days. For more information call **1-800-467-8600** or go to [www.health.usi.edu](http://www.health.usi.edu).





## PROBLEM SOLVING WITHIN YOUR HOME

- Step 1: Voice Concerns to Those Directly Involved**  
**Step 2: Bring Your Concerns to Staff Supervisors**  
**Step 3: Follow the Home's Complaint Process**

See prior issues of *VOICES Viewpoint* for explanation of steps 1 through 3 or online at [www.voicesinc.info](http://www.voicesinc.info).

**Step 4: Work With the Resident or Family Council**—Many nursing homes have a resident council and/or a family council that meets regularly to discuss concerns, projects and activities. Councils vary in their effectiveness and independence. They can be useful tools for exploring whether your concerns are shared by others. Both resident and family councils have the right to meet in private without employees of the home present. This allows members of the councils to feel comfortable speaking openly. Councils can also be helpful in pushing for changes needed to resolve concerns; there is power in numbers!

If your council's actions are not effective, get involved to help strengthen the council. Your Ombudsman can help by attending meetings. She can provide information about the laws governing long-term care homes and the rights of those living in them. If you need assistance call your Ombudsman, Michelle, at 423-2927.

(Taken from National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform's *Resolving Problems in Nursing Homes*, Consumer Information Sheet, 1999)

## ADVOCACY TIP

Every 12 to 15 months a home that receives Medicaid or Medicare funding is required to have an annual state survey. This survey is conducted by the Indiana State Department of Health. The surveyors will post signs announcing that a survey is in progress. When you see that the surveyors are in the home, feel free to speak with a member of the survey team about quality of life, quality of care and/or resident rights.



## INDEPENDENCE DAY QUIZ

- On July 4, 1776 we declared Independence from whom?
  - Germany
  - Spain
  - Great Britain
  - Rome
- How many branches of government do we have?
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
- How many states are there?
  - 52
  - 50
  - 49
  - 53
- How many stripes are on the American Flag?
  - 10
  - 11
  - 13
  - 15
- What is the Official Language of the United States?
  - None
  - English
  - Latin
  - Esperanto

ANSWERS: 1. C 2. B 3. B 4. C 5. A

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 AND CONFIDENTIAL



Upholding the rights and dignity  
 of Nursing Home Residents

DONATIONS AND MEMORIAL  
 CONTRIBUTIONS ARE  
 GREATLY APPRECIATED!

