

Serving residents of long-term care homes in Vanderburgh County



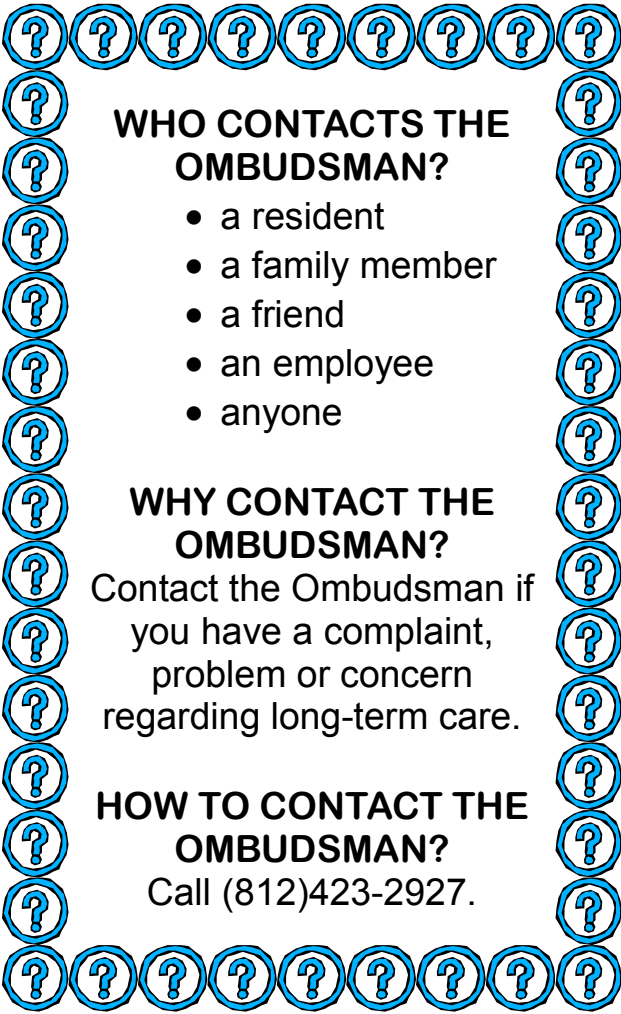
VOICES VIEWPOINT

Volume 5,
Issue 1
Spring
2009



WHAT IS VOICES?

VOICES, Inc. provides free and confidential Long-Term Care Ombudsman services. We are a not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1980. VOICES, Inc. is the only agency in Vanderburgh County dedicated solely to advocate for residents in Evansville, Indiana nursing homes and licensed assisted living homes. Our 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.



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 (812)423-2927.



AREA-WIDE RESIDENT COUNCIL MEETING

The quarterly area-wide resident council meeting will take place on **Friday, May 1st**. It will be held at the **Browning Event Room at the Central Library** from **2:30 to 4:00 p.m.** Doors will open at 1:30 p.m. There will be information on resident rights, discussion about electing officers, refreshments, socializing, and bingo.

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.

CARE PLAN: THE KEY TO GOOD CARE

WHAT IS A PLAN OF CARE?

A plan of care is a strategy for how staff will help you. It says what each staff person will do and when it will happen. For instance—the nursing assistant will help Mrs. Smith walk to each meal to build Mrs. Smith's strength.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ASSESSMENT AND CARE PLANNING?

Every person in a long-term care home has a right to good care. The law says the home must help people "attain or maintain" their highest level of physical, mental, and emotional well being. In order to give good care, staff must assess you and write a plan for your care. This care plan should take into consideration each of your life-long patterns, interests, strengths, and needs.

WHAT IS A RESIDENT ASSESSMENT?

The gathering of information about what help you need by assessing how well you can walk, talk, eat, dress, bathe, see, hear, communicate, understand, and remember. Staff should also ask you about your habits, activities, likes, and dislikes so they can help you live more comfortably and feel more at home.

WHEN ARE CARE PLAN MEETINGS HELD?

They must occur every 3 months. They should also occur when there is a big change in your physical or mental health that might require a change in your care.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TALK ABOUT AT THE MEETING?

Talk about what you need and how you feel. Ask questions about food, activities, interests, staff, personal care, and medications. You may want to be persistent about your concerns and choices.

For more information, call your Long-Term Care Ombudsman at (812)423-2927.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS . . . the Vanderburgh County Senior Olympics 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 strength. Ring toss, fishing, ball toss, washers, and wheelchair races are just a few of the categories available. 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. The top three winners in each category are awarded medals, so start training now to be in your best shape for the Olympics!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2009

9:00 a.m. – assisted living residents

1:00 p.m. – nursing home residents

SEE YOU AT SWIRCA ON THE 3rd!

CULTURE CHANGE CAN BE GREAT!?!?!

When we hear the term “culture change”, we think of changes to our traditions and customs. Culture change is not changing your traditions or customs, but changing a home’s traditions and customs.

CULTURE CHANGE IS A CHANGE IN HOW ONE THINKS ABOUT CARE. For example, instead of the home deciding when and how you will eat, bathe, sleep, etc., the home will allow you to direct your daily routines. Staff will focus on you as an individual and support you in living your life.

This is not to suggest that the home you live in is lacking. We all know that no matter how good a job one does, there is ALWAYS room for improvement. Here are a few examples of how other facilities in Indiana are changing to a homey environment through culture change:

SHOWERS

- Colorful shower curtains, plants, pictures, decorations, and soothing music are used. (Ahhh!)
- Linen cars are replaced with dressers.
- Large, fluffy towels are heated on towel warmers. (Ooooooh!)
- Staff make the shower more like a spa and less like a locker room.

MEALS

- Staff serve meals while wearing aprons and using an attitude of “Be our guest.” (Let’s dine!)
- Drink orders are taken at the table or bedside.
- Food choices are offered from a menu or from a buffet.
- Occasional meals with a theme are celebrated. (Backyard BBQ, Italian Masterpiece, Trip to the Orient, Summer Festival Feast, etc.)
- “Bibs” are replaced with large napkins with Velcro fasteners and no longer called “bibs”.
- Medications are not passed at mealtime.
- Staff make the atmosphere more like a restaurant and less like a cafeteria.

OTHER APPROACHES

- Staff adopt an attitude of “It would be my pleasure!” when you ask them for something. (How special would you feel!)
- Instead of staff referring to a resident at “502” staff refer to the resident at “502 Wisteria Way.”
- Staff use walkie-talkies to cut down on distracting overhead noise and save steps/time.
- Staff talk to residents instead of having personal conversations with each other.
- Resident birthdays are celebrated/acknowledged individually.
- Life history notebooks of residents are kept at the nurses’ station so staff can use them to get to know each resident.

How wonderful to be treated as an individual, have caregivers look at the world from your point of view, live in a positive social environment, and have staff adapt to your routines.

We all know change is not easy. But change means growth; grow means improvement. Just take one step at a time. Encourage your home’s administration to make a move towards culture change. Discuss ideas with your resident council. Many changes require little or no money, just effort. Who better than you and your fellow residents to suggest changes to improve your quality of life.

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 Facility's Complaint Process
- Step 4: Work With the Resident or Family Council
- Step 5: Contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

For further information on steps 1 through 5, see prior issues of *VOICES Viewpoint*, or go online to www.voicesinc.info and click on "newsletters".

Step 6: Contact the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)

The ISDH licenses nursing homes and some assisted living facilities in Indiana. The ISDH also conducts annual inspections to monitor and evaluate the care provided at these homes. Also, the ISDH must respond to complaints from consumers about poor care.

Once you make a complaint, the ISDH will send a surveyor to the home to investigate the complaint. The ISDH response time varies and they will not inform the home of their upcoming visit. Nor will the surveyor tell the facility you made the complaint, unless you give the ISDH permission to do so. During the investigation, the surveyor will look at records, and talk to residents and staff. The surveyor may also contact you with additional questions. If the investigation determines there is no problem that violates federal and/or state long-term care practices, the ISDH will pass the facility. This process can be frustrating for consumers because it can be lengthy and violations can be difficult to prove after the fact. If you make a complaint to the ISDH and give your name and address, they will send you a copy of the report once the process has been fully completed.

If you have tried steps 1 through 5 or do not feel comfortable following the previous 5 steps, make a complaint with the ISDH by calling 1-800-246-8909 or send an e-mail to complaints@isdh.state.in.us. You may also contact your Long-Term Care Ombudsman at (812)423-2927 for information or assistance.

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

2425 US HWY 41 N
SUITE 405
EVANSVILLE, IN 47711
PHONE: (812)423-2927
FAX: (812)423-4350
WWW.VOICESINC.INFO

ALL SERVICES ARE FREE
AND CONFIDENTIAL



Upholding the rights and dignity
of Nursing Home Residents

DONATIONS AND MEMORIAL
CONTRIBUTIONS ARE
GREATLY APPRECIATED!

