



## Close to Home

*News from the office of Kentucky's Long-Term Care Ombudsman*

### **From the office of the Kentucky Long-Term Care Ombudsman**

One function of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) is to collect and analyze data relating to complaints and conditions in long-term care facilities. This data includes the number of facilities visited and types of complaints filed with the ombudsmen. The data is summarized in the National Ombudsman Reporting System (NORS). Each year the state is required to submit this information to the Federal Administration on Aging.

The 2007 NORS data revealed that the ombudsmen provided 154 trainings for facility staff, 1028 consultations to facilities, and 2214 consultations to individuals. The most frequently addressed topics were resident rights, ombudsman services, elder abuse, and long term care selection.

The ombudsmen received 4797 complaints from residents, relatives/friends of residents, facility staff, etc. The top five complaints related to nursing facilities were: 1) failure to respond to assist, 2) personal hygiene/grooming, 3) medication administration, 4) food service, and 5) shortage of staff. The top five complaints related to personal care and family care homes were: 1) food service, 2) lost or stolen personal property, 3) personal funds mismanagement, 4) lack of dignity/disrespect from staff, and 5) poor discharge/eviction planning.

These are true and legitimate concerns from residents' perspectives that provide a wealth of information from which to initiate quality assurance programs and improve the residents' lives and quality of care. If you would like more information about the NORS data, please call our office at 1-800-372-2991.

Jackie Strader  
State Long-term Care Ombudsman

### **Volunteer Spotlight**

Mertigene Bell has been a certified ombudsman volunteer for the Green River Ombudsman Program for 19 years. She received her certification in 1991 and also serves on The Ombudsman Advisory Council.



Mertigene received the AARP 2007 Andrus Award for Community Service, which further shows her volunteer dedication to many organizations in her community. Mertigene is a small



Contact Information:  
275 E. Main St., 1E-B  
Frankfort, Ky 40621  
502-564-5497  
1-800-372-2991  
jacquel.strader@ky.gov



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town girl who never forgot the importance of a good neighbor or a dependable friend. She was the sole caregiver for her parents and used her strong determination to keep them home on the family farm in rural Kentucky until their deaths.

As a nurse in WWII, Mertigene saw her fair share of heartache. She used her warm nature to calm the fears of many, offering her hand in friendship and bringing smiles to those in need.

### **April 16, 2008 Is National Healthcare Decisions Day!**

The National Healthcare Decision Day Initiative is a collaborative effort to ensure that all adults with decision-making capacity have the information and opportunity to communicate and document their healthcare decisions. An advance directive allows you to give instructions about your health care, clearly explaining what you want done or not done if the time comes when you can't speak for yourself. For more information and materials, visit [www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org).

### **"Home Sweet Home"**

Being cared for by the same caregiver is critical to quality of care and quality of life. One way this can be accomplished is by employing consistent assignment. Consistent assignment refers to the same caregivers consistently caring for the same residents almost, 85 percent of their shifts, every time they are on duty. Facilities that adopt consistent assignment never rotate their staff. For more information on how to systemically implement consistent assignment visit the Advancing Excellence website at [www.nhqualitycampaign.org](http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org), or contact us at 1-800-372-2991.

### **Tools of the Trade**

Historically, standard practice in long-term care facilities uses a wheelchair as both a stationary device and mobility device. As care turns more person-centered, some facilities are adopting measures to promote **Getting Residents Out of Wheelchairs (GROW)**. The GROW Coalition's goal is for residents residing in nursing homes to use regular seating devices in situations where sitting in a regular chair is considered the norm and socially acceptable. For example, if residents are talking and visiting with friends or family members, place them in a chair or recliner. At mealtimes, transfer them from a wheelchair to dining room chair. For more information visit, [www.growcoalition.org](http://www.growcoalition.org).



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