REVAMPED TRAINING AND NEW ASSESSMENT FORM

Ever wonder what it would be like to work with people across the state of Florida without ever meeting them face to face?

For many Ombudsman Program staff, this was a reality until everyone came together during a training session hosted in Altamonte Springs, beginning Halloween day. There may have been some treats being passed around but there were no tricks as staff members focused on learning two new initiatives of the program: revamped certification training for new volunteer ombudsmen and a new administrative assessment form.

With the program’s focus on recruiting and retaining volunteers to better serve Florida’s elders, the program revamped its training materials with the goal of decreasing classroom training and increasing time spent in the field. New forms of training materials include interactive presentations, online and self administered training videos and comprehensive quizzes. With the release of the new training material, the program hopes to begin full implementation at the start of the new year.

“We want to provide the most effective and easiest form of training to better equip and serve our volunteers so they can better serve residents of long-term care facilities,” said State Ombudsman Training Administrator James McFatter. “The new trainings will be available on our website in a variety of formats such as Prezi, PowerPoint, Google quizzes and comprehensive PDF packets. We’re even hoping to get a CD or MP3 format so volunteers will have the option of listening to lessons in their cars.”

The intensive two-and-half-day training in Altamonte Springs reviewed the new training material in addition to a new resident-centered administrative assessment form.

Ombudsmen staff gathered in teams and blanketed the town of Altamonte Springs, Florida, visiting the area’s nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family-care homes to pilot the new assessment form and meet with facility residents. The new form is designed to give ombudsmen the opportunity to record their observations and work with residents and staff to make sure the needs of residents are being met.

Lashea Heidelberg, a five-year program veteran and East Central District Manager said, “I like the layout of the form and I think it gives you more flexibility to have a resident-centered administrative assessment form.

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Prioritizing residents’ rights and protection during this Legislative session.

The holidays are quickly approaching along with Florida’s Legislative session, with this year’s gathering of policy makers scheduled to start on January 10, 2012. In preparation for this year’s session, the program looks back at its 2011 accomplishments, including participation in the Governor’s Assisted Living Workgroup to promote improvement of care for residents living in long-term care facilities, the creation of new training materials and a redesign of the administrative assessment/visitation form. The new visitation form truly complies with the spirit of the Older Americans Act, creating questions that will enable our volunteers to listen and advocate for concerns and needs expressed by residents. I would like to give out kudos to the staff and volunteers for their input and comments during the redesign of this form.

A huge thank you and kudos also need to go out to Aubrey Posey, Deputy State Ombudsman for Legal Advocacy, Policy and Training, and to James McFatter, State Ombudsman Training Administrator, for their time spent on the creation of the new training materials. The new training materials encourage self-study time for our volunteers, decreased classroom training and increased time spent in the field. We want to equip our volunteers with the best tools possible to become the most effective advocates for long-term care facility residents.

The program had a busy year with creating new training materials and the new administration assessment/visitation form, in addition to my participation with the Assisted Living Workgroup. The changes we proposed to the workgroup will also be brought to policy makers in this year’s annual report. Our recommendations include the following:

• Establish requirements in Statute for the relocation or termination of residency from an assisted living facility (ALF), including requiring the ALF to send a copy of the written notice for relocation or termination to the program within five days of providing the notice to the resident and permitting the resident to appeal the relocation or termination to a neutral third party.

• Make training for ALF staff members working in ALFs with a limited mental health (LMH) license more stringent, including developing a comprehensive, standardized curriculum for mental health training, increasing the training hours for staff members from six hours of LMH training to 12, requiring staff members to pass a test with a minimum score of 80 percent, and requiring all staff members who have contact with residents with mental health issues to complete the mental health training.

• Require 40 hours of CORE training for ALF administrators and managers and increase the passing score on the CORE exam to 80 percent.

• Require the Agency for Health Care Administration to survey assisted living facilities annually.

• Revise the Baker Act statutes to exclude individuals with brain injuries, dementia or other related disorders, and disorders included in the definition of “mental illness.”

• Allocate additional funding for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to expand recruitment efforts and train new ombudsmen.

• Require all ALF administrators to be licensed through the Department of Health.

http://ombudsman.myflorida.com
SUMMARY OF TOP COMPLAINTS:
FALL QUARTER

Under State law, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is responsible for publishing its complaint data each quarter. The following data reflects verified complaints from cases closed between September 1, 2011 - November 30, 2011. The data also shows the number of these complaints resolved.

17 complaints
6% resolved
Sunshine Acres-License suspended as of 7/22/2011 (ALF) - Caryville
(examples: personal property; personal hygiene)

17 complaints
100% resolved--> (great job!)
ALP Housing Corp. (ALF) - Kissimmee
(examples: menu; access to own records)

12 complaints
75% resolved
Helping Hands Foundation (ALF) - Havana
(examples: cleanliness; personal funds; odors)

12 complaints
67% resolved
Peacekeeper's Den (ALF) - St. Petersburg
(examples: discharge/eviction; reprisal/retaliation)

11 complaints
82% resolved
Carden House (ALF) - St. Petersburg
(examples: dignity/respect; personal property)

12 complaints
58% resolved
Sarasota Health and Rehab. Center (nursing home) - Sarasota
(examples: privacy; range of motion/exercise)

8 complaints
50% resolved
South Heritage Health and Rehab. (nursing home) - St. Petersburg
(examples: supplies/linens; social services)

8 complaints
75% resolved
Jacaranda Manor (nursing home) - St. Petersburg
(examples: confinement; personal property)

7 complaints
100% resolved--> (great job!)
Eden Springs Nursing and Rehab Center (nursing home) - Crawfordville
(examples: pressure sores; dignity/respect)

7 complaints
100% resolved--> (great job!)
Evans Health Care (nursing home) - Ft. Myers
(examples: fluid availability/hydration; personal hygiene)

Complaint Data Terms:

Verified: It is determined after work (interviews, record inspection, observation, etc.), that the circumstances described in the complaint are generally accurate.

Not Verified: It is determined after work (interviews, record inspection, observation, etc.), that the circumstances described in the complaint are not generally accurate. Verification is determined by the ombudsman.

Resolved: The complaint was addressed to the satisfaction of the resident. Resolved is one of several disposition codes used by the program. Resolution is determined by the resident.

To find out more about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program's complaint or facility assessment data, call toll-free 1-888-831-0404 and ask to be transferred to a representative in your area. All services are free and confidential.
REVAMPED TRAINING AND NEW ASSESSMENT FORM (CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

conversation with the residents.”

In addition to learning the new administrative assessment form and certification training, the workshop gave Ombudsman Program staff the chance to brainstorm ideas for their districts, share common challenges and learn from in-service trainings. Steven Hitchcock, a Clearwater attorney and registered pharmacist, and Ann Proie, the Southwest Florida District Manager, performed in-service trainings on medications. Proie pulled from her background as a registered nursing supervisor for 35 years for her presentation.

“I started out as a volunteer in this program because I wanted the chance to give back to the community,” said Proie. “And this job is a great fit. I enjoy the investigative work of an ombudsman and advocating for long-term care facility residents.”

Unlike Proie, Kevin McKeown is newer to the program and began working as the Treasure Coast District Manager in June, 2011. McKeown was eager to meet fellow staff members during the October training.

“The most valuable part of the training was interacting with the other district managers and how they do their jobs,” said McKeown. “It gave me insight on how to better myself as a manager.”

McKeown went on to describe his favorite part about taking on the role of district manager. “I think the most rewarding thing is seeing how we actively help and care for the residents in the facilities,” said McKeown. “My favorite part of the job is getting out of the office and visiting residents. I enjoy talking to them about their life before coming to the facility and what kinds of things they like to do. It means so much to some of these residents for someone to come and sit with them for 10 minutes and just talk. It’s very humbling.”

With the new administrative assessment form, ombudsmen staff and volunteers will be guided to experience exactly what McKeown described, and spend more time talking with long-term care facility residents to listen to their concerns versus running down a checklist of regulatory tasks.

2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT RELEASED

With the approaching cooler weather and early convening of the Florida Legislative session, the Ombudsman Program releases its 2010-2011 state-mandated annual report. Each year, the report is distributed to providers, policy makers and concerned citizens. This year’s report showcases the work of its dedicated volunteer ombudsmen, the program’s accomplishments and recommendations for changes in the long-term care industry.

“No one knows residents better than ombudsmen,” said State Ombudsman Jim Crochet. “Our volunteers go into long-term care facilities for each complaint investigation and administrative assessment, working to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of the state’s most vulnerable population.”

How much time was spent in these facilities? Typically, volunteers are asked to give 20 hours of service to the program each month. Many volunteers give much more, selflessly donating their time and energy to resolve complaints to the resident’s satisfaction. Through case investigations alone, volunteers gave over 18,000 hours of unpaid service this past fiscal year, investigating over 7,500 complaints. This number does not include the number of hours spent on other volunteer duties, such as administrative assessments, legislative visits, resident visits, attending local council meetings and speaking at local libraries or at other special events to recruit additional volunteers.

“One way volunteer ombudsmen help residents is by responding to a gambit of complaints. This past year, complaints describing lack of dignity, respect and poor staff attitudes totaled 225 as the second top complaint received in nursing homes, just behind complaints regarding discharge and eviction at 318. Complaints may be made by any person or group concerned for the health, safety, welfare or rights of long-term (continued on page 5)
Ombudsman shining stars

Leila Adderton and David Warshofsky, South Dade and Florida Keys: Leila and David have put forth a tireless effort to handle resident complaints over the past three months. Both Leila and David have provided guidance, professional expertise, insight and encouragement to program volunteers and staff and have stepped up to fill much needed roles as advocates for those who need a voice.

Jeannie Anastasi, Verna Browning, Karen Hardin, Judy Kargel and Abel Santos, South Central Florida: Each one of these five council members have worked extremely hard and have graciously accepted all the complaint cases presented to them. In addition to their case loads, they have covered presentations, volunteer fairs and resident visits. These volunteers are truly dedicated in their advocacy efforts.

Joanne Crain, Southwest Florida: Joanne is an exceptional ombudsman and works long hours to assure the residents have what they desire and need. She has the respect of her peers as well as staff in facilities. She has been instrumental in promoting positive change in facilities for the benefit of the residents. She is tireless in her advocacy efforts.

Susan Littauer, Treasure Coast: Susan was recently elected as the District Chair. She assisted with several applicant interviews, has worked on several complaint investigations, including helping a resident get a discharge notice repealed, and has organized ombudsmen to attend an upcoming assessment training. She is of great value to the program and to this district.

Joan Anderson, Paul Champion, Dana Darby, JoAnna Emerson, Bill Gaffney, Barbara Greene, Marvin Greene, Warren Larson, Lon Ligon, Carla Marek, Bob Mills, John Thomas and Judith Whited, North Central Florida: These volunteers demonstrated above and beyond efforts by organizing and participating in a Residents’ Rights Month celebration in October. They worked to serve residents meals and beverages, assisted with seating and educated attendees about resident rights. These volunteers are truly inspiring.

2010-2011 Annual report released

(continued from page 4)

care facility residents. Relatives and residents were the top complainants, representing over 70 percent of complaints reported concerning nursing home residents.

The most frequent complaint found in assisted living facilities and adult family-care homes was medications administration and organization, totaling 289, followed by 281 complaints about the menu. Although 27.95 percent of the concerns were reported by residents, concerns were also reported from relatives and ombudsmen.

Besides descriptions of the top complaints in long-term care facilities received by the program, this year’s annual report also includes quotes from residents served, the money volunteers saved the state of Florida in salaries and administrative costs through hours of unpaid service, and the program’s legislative recommendations.

With the release of this report, the program hopes to continue its efforts to create dialogue between policy makers, long-term care facility residents, family members, caregivers and concerned citizens about reoccurring issues in the long-term care industry. Working together with volunteers, agency partners and stakeholders, the program hopes to promote positive change to make sure residents’ rights are being protected and respected.

To receive a free copy of this year’s Ombudsman Program’s annual report, call toll-free 1-888-831-0404 or write to:

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000

Or, visit the Ombudsman Program online at ombudsman.myflorida.com to view and print the annual report from home.
An ombudsman is a volunteer who helps to improve the lives of people who live in long-term care settings like nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family care homes.

As members of Florida’s elder population make the transition into long-term care facilities, a strong support system for each individual becomes critical. Unfortunately, many long-term care residents do not have anyone to look out for their best interests when it comes to personal health, safety, welfare and rights.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is made up of more than 300 volunteers who are passionate about improving the quality of life for residents. It takes a special kind of person to commit to such a mission. We are proud to be a unique program whose success depends on the boldness and compassion of volunteers. These special individuals dedicate thousands of unpaid hours each year to ensuring that the voices of Florida’s long-term care facility residents are heard.

To learn more about how the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program can help you or someone you know, call us toll-free at 1-888-831-0404 or visit us online at http://ombudsman.myflorida.com.

All services are free and confidential.