LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

CODE OF ETHICS

In order to provide appropriate, quality advocacy services, program representatives shall conduct themselves with integrity and accountability and shall behave at all times in a manner consistent with the concepts and principles contained within these program orientation materials. The program representative shall sign an agreement of participation in the program and make a commitment to program requirements, mission, values, code of ethics, and the responsibility to uphold federal and state law, rules and regulations, and additional items located within program Operational Guidelines, and program Policy and Procedures.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is to protect the health, safety, welfare, human and civil rights of long-term care facility residents by investigating and resolving complaints, promoting the enforcement of laws and regulations, and advising and recommending policy to state and federal governments on long-term care issues.

Statement of Values

Value of Elders

- Elders, whether they are residents of long-term care facilities or live in their own homes, are to be valued. We believe that older people have a positive effect on society. We believe this about all people, no matter how severe the disability or the level of dementia.

- Society should value our elders and provide protection of their rights as needed.

- Every person is unique and each has the right to participate in decisions that affect him/her.

- No resident should ever be abused, neglected or exploited.

- Residents should have meaningful access to the ombudsman program to protect their rights.

- Older people should have autonomy and choice, to the maximum extent possible, about how they live their everyday lives.

Value of Long-Term Care Facilities

- Facilities should provide living environments for residents that allow them to live in the manner they lived in their own homes.
• Facilities should promote residents’ rights, not just tolerate them.

• Facilities should provide individualized care that promotes the highest possible level of functioning and well being.

**Values of Program Representatives**

• Treat all people with dignity, respect and compassion.

• Be resident-centered, not facility-centered, and place the welfare of the resident above all other concerns.

• Be able to develop relationships with residents based on mutual trust. This is the foundation of our success in providing direct, individual advocacy services.

• Know that confidentiality and empowerment are the cornerstones of our advocacy services.

• Provide an easy, meaningful access to program services so that residents know how to contact us and avail themselves of our services.

• Build awareness in the community of ombudsman services through resident councils, family councils and public education.

• Understand and ensure the enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies that improve long-term facility care.

• Defend each resident’s right to self-determination, even if the resident’s decision runs counter to our own personal or moral beliefs or seems detrimental to the resident’s health.

**Code of Ethics**

Each representative of the Office of the State Ombudsman shall:

• Act at all times to respect the dignity and individuality of residents of long-term care facilities, representatives of residents in long-term care facilities, and each other.

• Respect each resident’s right to self-determination and right to live a life according to values adopted for him/herself, and refrain from restricting services on the basis of the program representative’s personal beliefs. Each program representative will make every reasonable effort to ascertain and act in accordance with the resident’s wishes and beliefs.

• Provide service to all clients who request it without regard to age, gender, race, religion, social or economic status, national origin, personal characteristics, or lifestyle.

• Act in accordance with his/her role as an advocate of the resident and report any potential conflict of interest with this role. Generally, a conflict of interest is defined as any “situation in which regard for a private interest tends to lead to disregard of a public duty or interest.” Section 112.312(8), F.S. Specific
Volunteer conflicts of interest for LTCOP are defined in law at Chapter 58L-2, Florida Administrative Code.

- At all times, respect the privacy of every resident both within and outside the facility.
- Act to protect vulnerable individuals from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and report any cases of this to the proper agency.
- Be willing to advocate for all residents seeking assistance and investigate all complaints assigned.
- Act in accordance with federal and state law, rules and regulations, the LTCOP Operational Guidelines, the LTCOP Policy and Procedure Manual, and the Code of Ethics.
- Act, at all times, in a knowledgeable manner reflective of the training he/she has received and within the training guidelines and requirements of the program.
- Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the principles of empowerment. Only if residents are unable to act on their own behalf will a program representative intervene.
- Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of his/her role as a mandated reporter of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of and commitment to the observation of residents’ rights, including the resident’s right to have all information kept in strictest confidence.
- Perform necessary administrative assessments in accordance with Florida law.
- Display an attitude and demeanor respectful and supportive the program and its representatives.
- Wear ombudsman credentials whenever performing official ombudsman duties on behalf of long-term care facility residents.
- Develop and maintain a professional relationship with the staff of long-term care facilities, always mindful that his/her allegiance lies with the resident and the mission of the program.
- Present him/herself in a manner that reflects positively on the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

The State Long-Term Care Ombudsman reserves the right to release volunteers of their duties for violations of conduct. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the program or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment may be reassigned or released from their position.