

OMBUDSMAN

Nobody wants to place a loved one in a long-term care facility. Many families feel that the care and needs of their loved ones are best provided for at home. However, in some instances, placement into a long-term care facility of a loved one is unavoidable. When placement is necessary, the family typically becomes most concerned with finding the proper facility. Because of their busy schedules, families often worry about the checks and balances in the facility, while they are not present.

An Ombudsman is an advocate for your loved one once he or she has been placed in a long-term care facility. The State of Indiana is divided into 16 areas with each area having an Ombudsman. These Ombudsmen advocate for resident rights.

Each resident has rights that should be protected. Some rights would include the following:

- The Right to Information;
- Self Determination;
- Personal and Privacy Rights;
- Transfer and Discharge Rights;
- Visitation Rights;
- Protection Against Medicaid Discrimination;
- Protection of Personal Funds; and
- Rights Against Restraint and Abuse

The Senior Law Project of Indiana Legal Services, Inc. further defines the above rights in "The Legal Rights of Indiana Long Term Care Residents, A Guide to Quality Care". Please click here [\[hyperlink on here\]](#) for a form to order a copy of this booklet.

If these rights have been violated in any way, the area Ombudsman should be contacted. Residents, relatives, friends, attorneys, community groups, and/or anyone with a connection to the resident can contact the area Ombudsman. Once a complaint has been made to the Ombudsman, he or she will investigate the complaint. The information provided to the Ombudsman is confidential. Complaints that relate to the direct health and safety of residents are processed as priority.

Long-term care residents should be informed of their rights. An Ombudsman simply advocates those rights for families' loved ones who are faced with long-term care and placement in facilities. The more informed we become of our loved ones' rights; the better families can protect and preserve those rights with the help of the area Ombudsmen.

The Area 3 Ombudsman covers Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wells, and Whitley counties in the State of Indiana. The Area 3 Ombudsman is Daisy Schmidt. She can be contacted at (260) 469-3161 or toll-free at (877) 469-3161. Additional information concerning other area Ombudsman can be obtained from the Family and Social Services Administration website at www.in.gov/fssa.

Jeslynn C. Ruble
Paralegal
January 2008

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