



The Beacon

A Newsletter for Nursing Home Residents

July 2020

The NJ Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is an independent state agency whose sole mission is to advocate for the rights of residents of long-term care facilities. Our staff and volunteers are trained to help you receive the quality of care and quality of life you deserve. They are here to listen to your concerns and to work with you to solve any problems you may be having.

If you have a concern or complaint about your care or if you believe your rights are being violated, you can contact us at 1-877-582-6995. Calls are confidential, at your request. We currently cannot visit you in person but we will still do everything possible by phone (and other means) to help you.

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you up-to-date with important information. If you have a topic you want us to cover in a future issue, please call us or email us at outreach@ltco.nj.gov with your idea.

Racial discrimination is wrong!



If you or other residents have experienced or witnessed racial discrimination in your nursing home, please do not hesitate to call us. We want to make sure that every nursing home is an inclusive place for all. Let us all work to make sure that racism has no home in the nursing home!

Stimulus Recap

Most nursing home residents should have received a \$1200 payment under the CARES Act passed in March of this year in response to the COVID crisis. If you have not received your payment, you can check the status on the IRS website: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment>. If you cannot navigate that site, have a tech savvy friend or family member or the social worker help you.

If you suspect that the nursing home received your payment and will not give it to you, please call our office at 877-582-6995 and we will advocate for you. Your stimulus money belongs to you and you can spend it as you wish. It is not considered income and it will not be counted as a resource if spent within one year.



Residents' Rights/Care Planning

Chemical Restraints – What are my rights?

No one should be given antipsychotic drugs in place of good care! In fact, the federal Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987 guarantees residents' rights and specifically protects residents from the use of chemical and physical restraints – except when needed to treat a medical condition.



You have the right to dignity and the right to make your own choices and treatment decisions. This means, you have the right to know the purpose of your treatment, alternative treatments, and whether the likely benefits outweigh the risks before agreeing to any treatment. You also have the right to decline if you do not feel it is right for you. You have the right to be involved in your own care planning. Care plans are updated every 90 days.

Visitation/Outdoor Visits/Virtual Visitation



As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, nearly all visitors have been banned from long-term care facilities. On June 19, 2020, the NJ Department of Health relaxed those requirements somewhat in order to allow outdoor visits for people who do not have, or have not been recently exposed to, COVID-19.

If you wish to visit outdoors with a friend or a family member, please ask a staff member about the facility's outdoor visitation policy. In most cases, these visits are scheduled ahead of time and there are limits on the amount of time allotted.

In addition, facility staff should help you to communicate with friends and family members. This can be done by phone but emphasis has been placed on communicating virtually, through FaceTime or Skype or some other kind of video conferencing.

The LTCO anticipates that there will be additional changes and modifications to these visitation restrictions very soon. We hope to have an update on this in our August newsletter!

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman
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