



# The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

December 2023

## Important First Step on Financial Transparency

Nursing homes must disclose detailed owner and operator information under new regulations published Nov. 15 by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The rules provide a welcome step toward greater disclosure in an era of increasing corporate consolidation and private investment interests among nursing home ownership, said Laurie Facciarossa-Brewer, New Jersey's Long-Term Care Ombudsman.



Yet she cautioned that more scrutiny is needed to ensure nursing homes spend their dollars wisely and prioritize people over profit. Her office continues to advocate for legislative bills S2769 and A4484, which would require nursing homes to submit certified consolidated financial statements for themselves and any related entities involved in their operations.

New Jersey nursing homes receive billions of dollars annually from Medicare and Medicaid, Facciarossa-Brewer said, and they successfully lobbied for an extra \$120 million in the 2023 state budget.

"Residents, their loved ones, and the public at large have a right to know how every one of those dollars was spent," she said.

The LTCO encourages you to reach out to your legislator to support the bills. To learn more about the legislation or to find your legislators, visit [njleg.state.nj.us](http://njleg.state.nj.us).



Happy Holidays



## Raising Your Voice: Minimum Staffing Proposal



Thank you to everyone who reviewed and commented on the historic federal proposal to establish minimum staffing requirements in nursing homes. Special acknowledgement to our Community Engagement staff for helping residents submit their comments before the Nov. 6 deadline.

It was crucial for residents' voices to be heard because they live the reality of how understaffing diminishes their quality of care and quality of life.

The federal proposal required nursing homes to have RNs on-site 24 hours a day and provide at least three hours of nursing care per resident per day. It called for a three- to five-year implementation and allowed exemptions in some cases.

The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) will continue to advocate for more hours of nursing care, faster implementation, and zero exemptions. We expect the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to review comments, consider adjustments, and publish a revised proposal or a final rule in early 2024.

## Expert Insights on Vaccinations for Long-Term Care Residents

Join us Thursday, Dec. 7, at noon for the latest advice on vaccinations for the flu, COVID-19, and RSV from Meg Fisher, MD, Special Advisor to New Jersey's Commissioner of Health.

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/ex39bayr> to register for the online discussion, which is presented by the state Department of Health, advocacy group FACE NJ, and the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.



Dr. Fisher will discuss general recommendations regarding which vaccines older adults should receive and whether they can receive shots at the same time. She will also cover special considerations for individuals with various health conditions and those who are immunocompromised.

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

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