



News for Immediate Release

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Department of Aging Marks October as National Resident Rights Month

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania Department of Aging is encouraging all Pennsylvanians to recognize the rights of older Pennsylvanians living in long-term care facilities during National Residents Rights Month.

The month long event celebrates the importance of the Nursing Home Reform law of 1987. The federal law ensures quality of life, care, and dignity, while promoting and protecting the rights of each resident.

“Residents of Pennsylvania’s long-term care facilities can feel confident that someone will always advocate on their behalf because of a dedicated network of staff and volunteers of the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program,” said Secretary of Aging Brian Duke. “This program ensures that rights of individuals are upheld and empowers them to speak for themselves.”

The Department of Aging partners with the commonwealth’s 52 Area Agencies on Aging to provide ombudsman services to long term-care facilities.

Ombudsmen are legally based advocates who work to resolve individual complaints involving long-term care service. They also work to improve the long-term living system for residents and their families.

Residents of long-term care facilities can also become advocates themselves by enrolling in the Pennsylvania Empowered Expert Resident program, or PEER. Individuals in the PEER program develop skills that enable them to advocate for themselves and their fellow residents.

With a network of volunteer ombudsmen and PEERs, long-term care facility residents have access to over 2,000 trained specialists.

For more information on the State Long-term Care Ombudsman Program, visit www.aging.state.pa.us

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