



Office of the State Long-Term Care  
**OMBUDSMAN**  
*Established within the Iowa Department on Aging*

FY 2018 Budget Presentation  
Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee  
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Deanna Clingan-Fischer, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

# Mission

- The original and core mission of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OSLTCO) is to protect the **health, safety, welfare and rights** of individuals residing in long-term care. We do that by direct service of investigating complaints, seeking resolutions to problems and providing advocacy, with the goal of enhancing quality of life and care.
- In July 2015, the Office was designated to serve as the advocate for Medicaid Managed Care members who receive long-term services and supports in health care facilities, assisted living programs and elder group homes, as well as for members enrolled in one of the seven home and community-based waiver programs:
  - AIDS/HIV
  - Brain Injury
  - Elderly
  - Health & Disability
  - Intellectual Disability
  - Physical Disability
  - Children's Mental Health

# Unified State Program

- The OSLTCO operates as an independent agency within the Department, through policies and procedures that create a separately identifiable, distinct entity to advocate in compliance with state and federal law.
- The State Long-Term Care Ombudsman heads a statewide office and manages representatives of the office who provide ombudsman program services to the populations authorized by state and federal law.
- The OSLTCO is organized into four primary programs, which work together to serve Iowans across care settings, providing a more seamless, streamlined experience. The advantage of this structure is that the public doesn't have to know which program can assist – we work together to serve.

# Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

- This program responds to complaints within or about long-term care facilities and assisted living programs.
- Complaints (FFY 16): 1,171
- Cases (FFY 16): 708
- Residents/Tenants Served (FFY 16): 17,332
- Services Beyond Complaints\* (FFY 16): 11,779  
*\*Consultations, Technical Assistance, Education*
- Increasingly complex casework and an increase in service needs prompted a LEAN event in 2015, which resulted in a re-organization in late 2016 to create nine service regions. We **currently have one region without a devoted local long-term care ombudsman – Region 9 – which is being served through an on-call rotation plan that makes it difficult for the on-call ombudsman to adequately serve either region well.**

# Managed Care Ombudsman Program

- This program provides direct service to long-term services and supports Medicaid members by resolving concerns with their MCO
- Contacts (since January 1, 2016): **1,972**
- Type of issues evolving over time:
  - Accessing services/benefits
  - Change in members' care setting
  - Issues related to eligibility
- Top member services provided since April 1st:
  - Casework
  - Education and information on processes, contacts

# Discharge Specialist

- This program provides direct service to residents and tenants that face discharge from a nursing facility, residential care facility, assisted living program or elder group home through a notice of discharge or closure of the facility.
- Notices in FFY16: 322
  1. Financial Reasons (146)
  2. Level of Care (69)
  3. Behavior (58)
  4. Emergency (49)
- Federal regulation requires OSLTCO to receive all discharge notices for review; Iowa first in nation to offer devoted assistance to residents but specialist can't keep pace with need

# Volunteer Ombudsman Program

- This program recruits, trains and supports volunteers to assist our local long-term care ombudsman
- Volunteers (FFY16): 82
- Facilities (FFY16): 85
- Applications in Process: 14
- Since the program's inception in 2013:
  - Volunteer Visits: 5,997
  - Volunteer Hours: 9,481
  - Volunteer Value to State: **\$210,967.38**
- The state is at risk of losing that value due to an outdated volunteer management system; volunteers who leave cite cumbersome system as chief reason

# Recent News

- New Federal Regulation for Ombudsman Programs
  - Enhanced policies and procedures complete; technical bill and rule updates in development to codify according to our state's structure
- New Federal Regulation for Nursing Facilities
  - Directs all discharge notices to our office and provides clarity on residents rights
- Managed Care Ombudsman Program
  - Now serving designated populations
  - Evaluating best ways to serve seamlessly
  - Developing parallel rules to complement LTCO Program
- Medicaid Claiming
  - Working with Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)

# Efficiency Efforts – Planning for the Future

- Modernization of practices
  - Switching from hard copy publications in favor of digital resources
  - Evaluating risks to data security to safeguard confidential and personal health information maintained – before a breach occurs
  - Exploring more efficient and robust software solutions to improve management of volunteers, casework and data collection/reporting to state and federal policymakers
  - Adjusting work flows and re-working positions to address and identify gaps in staffing before demographic trends prevent office from delivering critical services
- Improved public resources and self-help materials
  - Modernizing our web presence, reviewing and updating public resources, and exploring new ways to distribute information without eliminating the tried-and-true methods that our population needs due to physical or cognitive conditions
- Streamlined Code chapter
  - Working on a complete re-organization of Iowa Code chapter to eliminate outdated references, update terminology and reflect current practice
  - Overhaul will result in Code chapter that provides better guidance to stakeholders and brings Iowa into compliance with federal regulation that went into effect July 1, 2016

# State Appropriations

	FY17 Appropriation	FY18-19 OSLTCO Request	FY17 Cut (SF130)	FY18-19 Governor's Recommended
OSLTCO	1,376,783	1,376,783	(39,547)	1,318,270



# Budget Concerns

- Iowa's ombudsman program is widely recognized as providing exceptional service and resources.
- Budget cuts now threaten the state's ability to stay in compliance with federal law and continue providing high-quality, timely services. We need a budget that keeps pace with Iowa's aging population and their service needs.
- An opportunity to diversify the OSLTCO's funding stream exists in Medicaid match dollars, but that option depends on state appropriations to leverage those federal funds
- **Without an increase for FY18-19, the OSLTCO will be forced to consider a reduction in services, layoffs, and increased case resolution timeframes.**



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