



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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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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