



Long-term Care Ombudsman Program: Supporting Transitions

To celebrate the 2021 Residents' Rights Month theme, "Reclaiming My Rights, My Home, My Life," the Administration for Community Living is highlighting the work of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to help older adults and people with disabilities living in long-term care facilities return to the community.

The Ombudsman program is often known primarily for their work to help people who live in long-term care facilities resolve disputes and improve their quality of care.

However, the Ombudsman program is also a resource for people who want to leave their facility and move back to their home or to another setting in the community. In fact, in fiscal year 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, the Ombudsman program provided over **4,000 direct complaint resolutions and advocacy services** to help people transition to a setting of their choice.

Helping Mary move to the community

When family arguments about where Mary (not her real name) "should" live began to cause her stress, an Ombudsman representative intervened to help. With the representative's help, Mary was able to move out of assisted living and return to her home. The Ombudsman representative also provided referrals to ensure that services and supports were in place, paving the way for Mary to be able to live according to her preferences.



There are two primary barriers to transitions that LTC Ombudsman help residents overcome:

- Lack of support from facility staff to help them move to a less restrictive setting account for **69%** of the complaints addressed by the program.
- Trouble accessing the services and supports they need to live independently in the community account for **31%** of the complaints.

In 2020, the Ombudsman program fully or partially resolved 67% of all transition complaints.

(18% were withdrawn and 15% were not resolved satisfactorily.)

Bob (not his real name) was stuck in a nursing home; he repeatedly asked the social worker to help him to move to a group home where his friends lived, but there was no action. The Ombudsman program intervened, advocating for his right to leave the nursing home and live elsewhere. Bob successfully moved and reports that his new home “feels like heaven.”

Collaboration with Aging and Disability Networks

The Ombudsman program may call on other agencies to assist in resolving problems or making referrals. Of all the program’s transition-related complaints, 12% were referred to other agencies, including:

- Area Agencies on Aging
- Aging & Disability Resource Centers
- Protection and Advocacy programs
- Centers for Independent Living.