

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
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## **Agency wants nursing home residents to know about new federal safeguards and rights**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program would like residents of the 81 nursing homes in North Dakota and their families to know about revised federal regulations strengthening residents' rights and protections.

This is the first comprehensive update since regulations were issued in 1991. Most of the changes in the residents' rights section had to be implemented by facilities by Nov. 28, 2016.

State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Karla Backman said significant changes include involving residents more in the care planning process; giving residents more choice in their daily schedules; and requiring nursing homes to have a grievance policy and a designated grievance official who must respond to complaints in writing. The new regulations also provide additional protections for residents in involuntary transfer and discharge situations, and require facilities to send a copy of the transfer/discharge notice to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program.

"Receiving the notice will allow the ombudsman assigned to the facility to check whether discharges and transfers comply with requirements and whether options to keep a resident in his or her current home (facility) were explored before a transfer/discharge," said Backman.

Moving to a new home can be stressful and affect a resident's physical and mental well-being. The ombudsmen can also provide education and support to residents and their families during a transfer or discharge.

Backman said the goal is always to allow the resident as much choice as possible, and to provide as much preparation information as possible to meet the requirement for a safe and orderly discharge.

The North Dakota Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has six staff assigned to provide resident-directed advocacy services to the residents of all the assisted living homes, basic care homes, nursing homes and other long-term care facilities. The staff members are based at the department's regional human service centers in Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo and Minot.

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## Expanded Rights for Long-Term Care Facility Residents – page 2

Backman encourages people to learn more about residents' rights by visiting the department's website at [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/ombudsman.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/ombudsman.html) or by contacting the local long-term care ombudsmen. Facilities must have contact information posted on site.

To report a concern about health, safety, welfare or rights of a resident of a long-term care facility, people can complete and submit the online complaint form (SFN 1829) at <https://apps.nd.gov/itd/recmgmt/rm/stFrm/eforms/Doc/sfn01829.pdf>, or they can contact the Aging and Disability Resource Link toll-free at 855-462-5465 and press option 1, or send a secure, encrypted email to [dhsagingombud@nd.gov](mailto:dhsagingombud@nd.gov).

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