

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Governor Declares Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Month, Joins Agency in Supporting the Rights of Long-Term Care Residents

BISMARCK, N.D. – When abilities change and people move into long-term care facilities, they do not lose important individual rights because they moved. The federal Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987 guarantees their rights.

To remind people of their rights to make decisions about their own care and to enjoy dignity, respect, and freedom, including the right to vote, Gov. Jack Dalrymple has joined the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division in recognizing October as Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Month. The governor's proclamation is posted online at <http://governor.nd.gov/media-center/proclamation/long-term-care-residents-rights-month>.

"Residents' Rights Month is an opportunity for us to raise awareness of the dignity, respect and the value of each individual resident, and we want to remind both long-term care facility staff members and residents about residents' rights," said State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Karla Backman.

Throughout the year, the state's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program works to support the rights of the 10,000 North Dakotans who reside in nursing homes, basic care and assisted living facilities, and other long-term care settings.

Backman said, "Residents have the right to be fully informed of services and charges, to be involved in their care planning, to enjoy private unrestricted phone calls and communication, to participate in community activities inside and outside of their facilities, and to exercise many other individual rights."

Backman encouraged people to find out more about residents' rights by visiting the department's website at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/ombudsman.html or by contacting the long-term care ombudsman assigned to their facility. Their contact information must be posted on site.

Backman, her staff of six professional long-term care ombudsmen, and about 20 volunteer ombudsmen serve residents of about 249 long-term care facilities in North Dakota. Together, they provide information about residents' rights and advocate for them while respecting their confidentiality and wishes.

For information or to report a concern about rights to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, 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 email dhsagingombud@nd.gov.

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