



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Volunteer Ombudsman Program Expands to Include Assisted Living Facilities

The State of Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care is expanding its Volunteer Ombudsman Program to include assisted living communities in addition to skilled nursing homes. This expansion includes community based residential facilities, residential care apartment complexes, and memory care settings. By encouraging volunteers to serve in a variety of long-term care settings, the Board on Aging can offer improved advocacy services for individuals, aged 60 and older, living in long-term care communities.

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program is a supplement to the agency's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, which works with individuals and their families to promote and protect the rights of long-term care consumers, while also working with long term care service providers to define and achieve the highest standards possible. The Volunteer Ombudsman Program currently operates in 35 counties.

Through the guidance of the Volunteer Ombudsman Program, volunteers conduct weekly visits with residents of long-term care facilities. During these visits, volunteers inform residents of their rights and help them address concerns related to their quality of life. By visiting consistently and building trusting relationships with residents, volunteers establish themselves as reliable resources who promote dignity, respect, and person-centered care.

As the number of assisted living communities in Wisconsin continues to increase, the need for volunteer advocates grows statewide. The Board on Aging and Long Term Care is looking for individuals with an interest in advocacy to join this program. No prior long-term care experience is necessary to become a Volunteer Ombudsman, as in-depth training and ongoing support is provided.

To learn more about the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program or to become involved with the Volunteer Ombudsman Program, visit longtermcare.wi.gov or call 1-800-815-0015.

