



Department
of Health

Nursing Home Resident Councils: Expectations & Requirements

Fireside Chat

JANUARY 23, 2025

WELCOME

- **Facilitator:** Maria Sacco, Healthcare Association of New York State
- **Panelists:**
 - Claudette Royal, New York State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
 - Jen Moore, Quality Assurance Manager, Office of Aging and Long-Term Care
 - Jackie Pappalardi and Lisa Volk, NYS Health Facilities Association
 - Elliott Frost, LeadingAge New York
- At the conclusion of today's discussion, participants will understand the expectations of a Resident Council from the provider, advocate, and regulatory perspectives.



WHAT IS A RESIDENT COUNCIL?

- What is a Resident Council?
 - A sense of community for residents to provide input.
 - An organized group of residents with purpose.
 - A forum to create opportunity.
 - An active and ongoing collaboration between the residents and facility.
 - A vehicle to bring about positive changes.
- Resident Councils are regulatorily required. [42 CFR § 483.10(f)(5)]
- Resident Councils typically meet monthly, participate in decision-making that impacts all residents, verbalize concerns and supports, ask questions and make recommendations, obtain information from facility staff on impactful issues, and form subcommittees to address specific topics.



WHAT IS A RESIDENT COUNCIL? (CONT.)

- There are typically residents, a staff facilitator, family, and Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program representation. Upon invitation, there may also be visitors, guests, and facility staff.
- Good organization includes agendas, bylaws, minutes, and attendance protocols.
- There are various structures. While a highly structured Resident Council might operate in one facility, an informally structured Resident Council might operate in another.
- Resident Councils often focus on grievance procedures, information distribution, education, activities, problem-solving, and special projects.
- Ideally, the residents run the Councils with support of facility staff. The residents speak freely, raise issues, are treated with respect and taken seriously, and any concerns are promptly addressed.
- These Councils have ready access to needed information.

CASE STUDY

A

- The Resident Council President read the minutes for the last monthly meeting. A resident raised her hand to complain that she's been to the last 6 meetings and always hears a complaint about the quality of food. She wants answers on what the administrator is doing to make improvements to the menus and quality of food. She said "enough is enough" so "why don't we just call the Department of Health to file a complaint?"
- *What are actions to make changes in the nursing home food quality and variety of food offered to residents?*



CASE STUDY

B

- Several residents have submitted complaints to the Resident Council about items missing from their rooms while they are at either therapy or recreation activities. At today's Resident Council meeting, Mr. Jones complained that he is missing his favorite bracelet received from his late wife. Mr. Jones said he told the Certified Nurse Aide, but that "no one takes [his] complaints seriously," and no one talked to him about the missing bracelet.
- *What are actions to look into Mr. Jones' allegation of missing items from his room or person?*



CASE STUDY C

- Mrs. Smith has been living at the nursing home for one year and over the last few weeks, has been withdrawn and obviously angry with her direct care staff. At today's Resident Council meeting, Mrs. Smith shared that she looked forward to attending Bingo on Thursday at 1:00pm but 3 weeks ago, her bath schedule was changed to the same time. Mrs. Smith explained the conflict and requested to return to her old time on the schedule, but was told "no, we have too many people at the time, and you have to keep the time we changed for your bathing." Mrs. Smith started to cry.
- *What should be done for Mrs. Smith?*



SUMMARY

- An engaged, well-run Resident Council can empower staff and residents, and help ensure transparency, healthier quality of life, reduced complaints, improved compliance, and better outcomes.
- The Resident Council may achieve faster results than a Department of Health complaint investigation.

NURSING HOME SURVEILLANCE RESOURCES



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REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACTS

- Capital District Regional Office, (518) 408-5372
875 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206
- Central New York Regional Office, (315) 477-8472
217 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202
- Western Regional Office, (716) 847-4320
295 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14203
- Western Regional Office, (585) 423-8020
1565 Jefferson Road, Rochester, NY 14623
- Metropolitan Area Regional Office, (212) 417-4999
90 Church Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10007
- Metropolitan Area Regional Office, (914) 654-7058
145 Huguenot Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801
- Metropolitan Area Regional Office, (631) 851-3611
320 Carleton Avenue, Suite 5000, Ctr. Islip, NY 11722



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program: <https://aging.ny.gov/long-term-care-ombudsman-program>
- Nursing Home Surveillance Program: nhinfo@health.ny.gov
- Healthcare Association of New York State: <https://www.hanys.org/>
- New York State Health Facilities Association: <https://www.nyshfa-nyscal.org/>
- LeadingAge New York: <https://www.leadingageny.org/>



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