

ADVOCACY SERVICES

What is an Ombudsman and What Does This Ombudsman Do?

Ombudsman definition: The Ombudsman (*om-budz-muhn*) is an independent governmental official who receives complaints against government (and government regulated) agencies and/or its officials, who investigates, and who if the complaints are justified, takes action to remedy the complaints.

Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

The Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (OMHDD) provides resources in the following three areas:

- Client Services (or General Ombudsman Services);
- Medical Review (Death and Serious Injury Reporting);
- Civil Commitment Training

Client/General Service

The OMHDD assists with the following:

- concerns or complaints about services,
- questions about rights,
- grievances,
- access to appropriate services,
- ideas for making services better,
- review guardian actions; and
- general questions or the need for information concerning services for persons with mental or developmental disabilities, chemical dependence or emotional disturbance.

Medical Review - Death and Serious Injury Reporting

An agency, facility, or program is required to report to the OMHDD the death or serious injury of a client within 24 hours of the incident. You may call: 651-757-1800, 1-800-657-3506 or FAX: 651-797-1950 or 651-296-1021. Get to know more about the MRS from the Medical Review Subcommittee section.

Civil Commitment Training and Resource Center (CCTRC)

The CCTRC can assist anyone who wants information regarding the Civil Commitment and Treatment Act. You may call: 651-757-1800, 1-800-657-3506. Get to know more about the CCTRC from the Civil Commitment Training and Resource Center section.

Ombudsman for Long-Term Care

"Enhancing the Quality of Life and the Quality of Services for Adults Through Advocacy, Education and Empowerment"

What Is The Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care? A program of the Minnesota Board on Aging, the Office advocates for person-directed living, throughout the health care continuum, which respects individual values and preferences and preserves individual rights.

Regional ombudsmen and volunteers, work with consumers, citizens, nursing homes, hospitals, home care and social service agencies and public agencies to enhance the quality of life and services for individuals receiving health care and supportive services at home, in hospitals, in nursing homes and boarding care homes, and in other community settings such as housing with services (assisted living, customized living), adult foster care and adult day centers.

The Office also works to enhance the quality of life and services for consumers by advocating for reform in the health care and social services delivery systems through changes in state and federal law and administrative policy.

What Is An Ombudsman? An ombudsman is an independent consumer advocate. Ombudsmen investigate complaints concerning the health, safety, welfare and rights of long-term care consumers, work to resolve individual concerns, and identify problems and advocate for changes to address them, at no charge to the consumer. Ombudsmen also offer information and consultation about nursing home, boarding care home, housing with services, assisted living, customized living, home care and hospital services, rights and regulations. Additionally, ombudsmen work with providers of long-term care services to promote a culture of person-directed living.

Who Do They Serve?

- Residents of nursing homes and boarding care homes
- Residents of other adult care homes (i.e., housing with services, assisted living, customized living or foster care)
- Persons receiving home care services
- Medicare beneficiaries with hospital access or discharge concerns
- Anyone seeking consultation about long-term care services

How Can We Help? Ombudsmen provide information and consultation about consumer rights and the regulations that apply to long-term care facilities, home and community-based settings, and home care services.

Ombudsmen help to resolve disputes between consumers and providers of long-term care services, regardless of where those services are provided.

Ombudsmen handle complaints and problems relating to

- Quality Care/Services
- Quality of Life
- Rights Violations
- Access to Services
- Service Termination
- Discharge or Eviction
- Public Benefit Programs

How Do I Find an Ombudsman? The state office staff and the regional ombudsmen serving the 7-county metropolitan area are located in the Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care's state office in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota. Nine regional offices are located statewide. Call our toll-free number: 1-800-657-3591 (TDD/TTY, please call 711). This toll-free number operates out of the state office. The local phone number is (651) 431-2555. When calling for an ombudsman in any region, you will be directly transferred to that ombudsman.

Office of the Ombudsman for State Managed Health Care Programs

The ombudsman helps people in Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) who are enrolled in a health plan for their Medical Assistance (MA) or MinnesotaCare benefits.

The ombudsman helps enrollees get needed care and resolve billing problems. The ombudsman provides information and assistance with the managed care grievance and appeal process available through the health plan and the state.

What is an ombudsman?

- A problem solver
- A neutral investigator
- An advocate for fair and equal treatment.

Who can get help from the ombudsman?

People on MinnesotaCare or MA who get their coverage through a health plan, or the authorized representative of a person enrolled in a health plan.

What can the ombudsman do?

- Help you identify issues and possible solutions
- Help you know your rights
- Investigate complaints
- Negotiate with your health plan to help you get the care you need
- Resolve billing issues
- Explain how to file a grievance, appeal or state fair hearing
- Help you navigate the health care system.

When should I call an ombudsman for help?

- You are not getting the care that you need
- You are getting bills that you think your health plan should pay
- You cannot solve a problem by talking to your health care provider or health plan
- You do not know how to make a complaint.

How do I contact the Ombudsman office?

- Call 651-431-2660 or 800-657-3729; TTY: 711
- Mail a letter to:

Ombudsman for State Managed Health Care Programs
PO Box 64249
St. Paul, MN 55164-0249