Long Term Care Ombudsman Program increases access to residents during pandemic

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Nevada's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program will resume on-site visits to facilities on Oct. 1 after seven months of precautionary restrictions during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency.

While long-term care ombudsmen nationwide have not been permitted into long-term care facilities since March 2020, Nevada's program has continued to advocate for long-term care residents without in-person visits. New guidance from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) allows for long-term care ombudsman programs across the country to reenter long term care facilities. Nevada's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program will begin on-site outdoor and window visits beginning Oct. 1. Indoor visits, in facilities without current COVID-19 cases, will resume on Oct. 19. With COVID-19 cases still occurring in Nevada, the indoor visit frequency may change depending on the COVID-19 status of facilities in any given week. Long-Term Care Ombudsmen will don the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) required by facilities and will adhere to all screening requirements to ensure the safety of residents, staff, and the ombudsmen.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has purchased Kindle Fire tablets for every licensed long-term care facility in Nevada. The tablets were purchased with the CARES Act grant funds received from the federal government. The tablets will be deployed in the next few weeks to every long-term care facility in the state. The goal of the tablets is to increase communication between residents and their family and friends. Additionally, the tablets will be used to increase resident access to the long-term care ombudsman program. Long term care ombudsmen will have the increased ability to attend virtual care plan meetings and resident council meetings. The Ombudsman program is teaming up with the Nevada CAN's NEST Collaborative, to provide free one-to one telephone-based support in using technology for any purpose. Residents can complete the request for assistance form at https://www.nevada211.org/seniors-request-for-assistance/ or call 2-1-1 from any phone and ask about receiving technical assistance.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program also purchased visitation booths from Super Color Digital to provide an additional method to visit with residents. The visitation booths will allow family members to visit their loved ones. The visitation booths will be delivered to all skilled nursing facilities, including rural hospitals with skilled nursing beds.

To report concerns about long term care facilities, please contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at 1-888-282-1155.

To report abuse allegations, please contact Adult Protective Services at 1-888-729-0571.

https://www.supercolor.com/visiting-booth-barriers/

https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh.pdf

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