



VOICES Viewpoint



**UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS & DIGNITY OF
NURSING HOME RESIDENTS**

What is VOICES?

We provide FREE Long-Term Care Ombudsman (advocacy) services to you if you live in a nursing home or licensed assisted living home in Vanderburgh County. You are entitled to information and/or referral services. Also, with your permission, we can investigate your complaints, help resolve your problems, and protect your rights. We are here to help you!

**Call Michelle Motta or Alicia Reeves at 1-812-423-2927 for
free, confidential assistance**

Resident Rights Corner — Choice in Medical Providers

It is shocking to Alicia and I, when residents tell us they have no knowledge of their legal right to choose their own medical providers. Facilities are to promote resident rights, but residents frequently tell us the physician was “given” to them upon admission. Or, they tell us they were “required” to use the facility medical director as their physician. Many assume when they use the medical director, that physician’s office is within the facility. That is not the case.

There should be at least one other physician that can provide services in the home. And, if:

1. You are able to go out to doctor appointments, and
2. That Doctor is willing and able to serve as your physician, and
3. You make your own appointments and arrange for your transportation to and from your doctor, then, you should likely be able to choose that physician in the community.

According to Indiana State Code 410 IAC 16.2-3.1-3 (n)(1) Residents' rights, - you have the right to “choose a personal attending physician and other providers of services.” This extends to providers such as: chiropractor, dentist, optometrist, podiatrist, pharmacy and hospice.

Oh and, the facility must inform you of the name, specialty, and way of contacting the physician responsible for your care.

Be Long Term Care Aware

The term “Quality of Life” is often mentioned when talking about long-term care. But what does it really mean? When you have quality of life, it means you live a meaningful existence and have control over your own decisions as much as possible. This includes enjoyable meals, meaningful activities, spiritual fulfillment, worthwhile relationships, and respect for your dignity and privacy. Each facility is required to provide care in an environment that promotes your quality of life.

They are also required to provide “reasonable accommodations” to assist you in engaging in relationships or activities that enhance your quality of life.

Do you have quality of life in your home? Ask yourself:

- Does the staff treat me with respect?
- Am I allowed to refuse doctor’s orders?
- Do I receive care on my schedule, rather than for the convenience of someone else?
- Do I decide when to go to bed or when to get up?
- Am I asked which activities I would like to attend?
- Is my private space respected? (No one should change the station on your radio or TV, open your drawers, or move your personal belongings without your permission.)
- When staff members come to my door, do they knock AND wait for me to invite them in before they enter?
- Have staff members asked me what name I prefer to go by and do they use it respectfully?
- Am I able to choose between a shower or bed bath and whether I prefer to bathe morning, afternoon, or evening?
- Am I ushered down the hall naked under a blanket to/from the shower room? This should never be!

Remember--**it is OK to speak up.** You are NOT causing trouble by making your wishes known! It’s your right. If you find you don’t have quality of life and need FREE and confidential assistance, **call VOICES, Inc. at 1-812-423-2927.**

Stay long-term care aware and follow:

VOICES, Inc. at
[facebook.com/voicesinc](https://www.facebook.com/voicesinc)

www.voicesinc.info

The Importance of Getting Good Sleep

Ever think of how important good sleep is to our attitude AND general health and wellbeing? According to *Lack of sleep: Can it make you sick?* By Eric, J. Olson, M.D.:

. . . your body needs sleep to fight infectious diseases. Long-term in this way lack of sleep also increases your risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart and blood vessel (cardiovascular) disease. www.MayoClinic.org

To get your best night's sleep, your sleep routine should be based on your likes.

- ⇒ What time do you like to go to bed?
- ⇒ Do you need pain or other medicine before going to bed?
- ⇒ What personal hygiene routine do you prefer?
- ⇒ What do you like to wear to bed?
- ⇒ How many blankets do you prefer?
- ⇒ Do you prefer a firm mattress or soft mattress?
- ⇒ Do you prefer to sleep in a recliner?
- ⇒ How many pillows do you prefer?
- ⇒ Do you like the room warm or cool?
- ⇒ Do you like the room dark or with some light?
- ⇒ Do you like the room quiet or with some background noise such as a television program or music?
- ⇒ What time do you like to get up?

If you sleep best by going to bed late, in a cool room, with a night light, listening to the television, your individual sleep preferences should be honored—as long as they don't infringe on the rights of your neighbors. (That is a topic for another time.)

If you find your sleep preferences are not honored, or you are awakened in the night by laundry carts sounding like a freight train barreling down the hall or by staff partying like it's 1999, then please call your Ombudsman. Good sleep is too important not to fight for! If you need help, we are here for you!

Your Ombudsmen,
Alicia and Michelle

Pointing out the good in others, helps us find the good in ourselves.

~Larry Lawrence

Frequently Asked Question

Question: Are visiting hours enforceable?

Answer: It is your home, so you have the right to have visitors of your choosing at any time of your choosing. However . . . your visitors cannot infringe on the rights of your neighbors. Your visitor late at night, needs to be quiet as to not wake up your neighbors. Your visitor must not be abusive and must follow all laws.

Question: If I am unhappy with my room or roommate what can I do?

Answer: You can request to move to another room anytime. Under some rare circumstances, you can ask that your roommate move. The facility must promptly notify you and your legal representative of any change in room or roommate assignment. You also have the right to refuse to transfer to another room in the facility if the purpose of the transfer is solely for the convenience of staff.

Springtime Funnies

Q: What do you call a girl with a frog on her head?

A: Lily.

Q: What do you call a rabbit with fleas?

A: Bugs Bunny.

Q: Why did the farmer bury all his money?

A: To make the soil rich.

Q: Why was the honey bee mad?

A: You'd be mad too if someone stole your honey.

Sources: <http://www.jokes4us.com/holidayjokes/> and http://www.primarygames.com/and_easterjokes/easteronelinersjokes.html

Eligibility for Medicaid:

Residents receiving Medicaid have undergone, or will undergo a redetermination, of their eligibility to continue to receive Medicaid benefits. This is based on a person's income, assets, and ability to function. States are supposed to redetermine eligibility by using existing information, however individuals may be asked to submit additional information.

Residents and their representatives should ensure their contact information is up to date with the Medicaid agency. Medicaid enrollees who receive a notice of potential termination have the right to appeal the decision and to a hearing. Ask for help if needed. Contact your long-term care ombudsman if you need assistance.

1-812-423-2927

The Resident Advocate Volume 7, Issue 1
from The Consumer Voice for
Quality Long Term Care

Voice Assistant Smart Speakers

If you are not being allowed to use an assistive device, such as a Google Nest or Alexa Dot, please contact us for assistance!

1-812-423-2927

VOICES is Only Able to Provide Essential Advocacy Services to Those in Long-Term Care Homes Because of:

Donations from generous people! Partial funding for the Ombudsman Program is provided by a Community Development Block Grant administered through the City of Evansville, Department of Metropolitan Development.

In addition, we are grateful for The Thomas A. & Sharon K. Ruder Foundation who partners with VOICES to uphold the dignity and quality of life of those living in long-term care homes in Vanderburgh County.



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