

VOICES Viewpoint



UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS & DIGNITY OF
NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

What is VOICES?

VOICES, Inc. is a non-profit organization. We provide Long-Term Care Ombudsman services to you whether you live in a nursing home or licensed assisted living home in Vanderburgh County. We investigate your complaints, help resolve your problems, and protect your rights. We can help with quality of life issues, selecting the right facility, sources of payment, advanced directives and resident rights. We are here to help you!

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

How Many Staff are Required to Care for you and Your Neighbors?

Have you ever wondered what the maximum number of residents a staff person should be caring for? Well . . . it is crazy that there is currently no requirement for a staff to resident ratio. You read that correctly. **There is no specific number of how many staff are needed to properly care for you and your neighbors!!!**

In fact, state AND federal regulations only require there to be enough staff to meet the needs of the residents. And, we know that this isn't usually happening. When Alicia and I are in the homes, we frequently see call lights going unanswered longer than they should. You have probably experienced staff telling you they are short staffed. We hear this often. When there is definite number set, what does that mean to have enough staff to meet your needs? How is that measured or determined?

Currently, what we do is address what is not getting done or is getting done very late. Are at least 2 showers a week being given to those wanting them? Are meals, meds and doctor orders being provided timely? Are you getting up and dressed and to your chosen activities timely? Are you going to bed when you choose? Are call lights being answered within 15 minutes? Are staff answering lights, say they will return and then don't return? You can call us for free confidential assistance.

Having a specific number of staff needed is essential for good quality of care. Numbers don't lie. If the number is not met, there is no question you don't have enough staff.

This is why The Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care has recently been educating and gathering information from residents, staff and families about what adequate staffing would mean to them and to you. They are advocating on a national level to get this done. The quotes below were taken from their Facebook page. What would adequate staffing mean to you? Let us know.

“

It is so difficult to get our outside items, be it clothes or food items. While these can seem unnecessary for you, I enjoy a soda, a piece of candy, a new pair of jeans when you lose weight. Mine simply slide down whenever turning in the bed or moving in my chair. Even a pair of socks would be nice. I miss when there was enough staff to go with us to a store, with the aides accompanying us, reaching for those items we cannot reach or reminding us of something you forgot to put on your list. I learned so much more about my aide. We laughed and cut up until we returned here. Life is different being short-staffed.

– Judith, long-term care resident



What would it mean to have adequate staffing in a nursing home?

No more waiting so long for my call light to be answered... I would be in a better mood most of the time. Unless you have had someone in a nursing home, be it friend or family or yourself, you do not know what being changed on time means, eating hot food hot and cold food cold at the right time, you can only imagine what precious things these are. **I haven't had good staffing in so long I find it difficult to imagine living that way.**

– Judith, long-term care resident



We recommend you stay long-term care aware and follow:

The Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care at
[facebook.com/theconsumervoice](https://www.facebook.com/theconsumervoice)

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

And, check out our new website that is now cell-phone friendly
www.voicesinc.info

Because of the Affordable Connectivity Plan (ACP), **you may be eligible to receive free government phone service, plus a free phone.**

FREE Unlimited Data including 25GB High-Speed Data
FREE Unlimited Text & Minutes
FREE 2.5GB High-Speed Mobile Hotspot Data
Plus, a FREE Smartphone

Do you participate in certain government programs like:

- **Food Stamps/SNAP**
- **Medicaid**
- **SSI: Supplemental Security Income**
- **Veterans Pension** benefit or **Survivors Pension**, etc.?

To see if you are eligible, go to:

www.assurancewireless.com/

If You Are Threatened With Eviction? Here Are Some Important Things To Know

The facility is your home and **you must not be** transferred or discharged **“evicted”** from the home **unless at least one of the following conditions is met:**

1. The nursing home cannot provide adequate care for the you;
2. Your health has improved to the point where you no longer need nursing home care;
3. You endanger the safety of other residents in the facility;
4. You endanger the health of others in the facility;
5. You refuse to pay for your stay (except when Medicaid is pending); or
6. The facility ceases to operate.

The following are **not permissible reasons** to be forced to leave:

1. You refuse treatment, care, medications, showers, etc.
2. You are grumpy, cantankerous or combative with care
3. You make complaints
4. You are uncooperative with staff
5. Your source of payment changes

Unless you initiated the move, the facility must:

1. Give written notice of your transfer/discharge on the form required by the Indiana Department of Health.
2. Give you, your representatives and the Ombudsman at least thirty days advance notice. (Under some specific rare circumstances, less than thirty days notice is acceptable.)
3. Include, on the notice, the reason for the transfer, appropriate location to which you will be transferred, information concerning your right to appeal the transfer, and contact information for your local and state ombudsmen.
4. Give information concerning bed-hold and your right to return to the next available semi-private bed if you need the services provided and Medicaid pays for your care.
5. Provide preparation and orientation by facility staff to ensure your safe and orderly transfer from the facility.
6. Allow you to make choices about your move especially where you wish to live.

If you receive a notice of Transfer or Discharge from the facility and **if you wish to appeal, you must do so within 10 days of receiving the notice or lose your right to appeal.** Your local ombudsman will be able to provide you with free assistance during this process. If you receive a notice and wish to appeal or just have questions, please **contact your local ombudsman, Michelle or Alicia immediately at 423-2927.**

Resident Rights Corner— To be Fully Informed

All of us are granted certain fundamental rights as citizens of the USA and, most importantly as persons worthy of respect and dignity. As someone residing in a long-term care home, **you are afforded additional rights.** These rights are provided to you through federal and state laws. Employees, families, community agencies, and you (EVERYONE!) must work together to protect your rights. However, **your best advocate is YOU!** But first, you need to know what your rights are. The following are just some of the rights specifically given to you to insure you are properly informed:

- o The right to receive a copy of all resident rights and your medical chart
- o The right to a copy of the facility's rules and regulations
- o The right to be informed of all services available and all charges
- o The right to be informed of the address and telephone number of the State Ombudsman, the Indiana Department of Health and other advocacy groups and the facility must post these numbers
- o The right to see the state survey (investigation) reports for the facility
- o The right to daily communication in a language you understand and the right to assistance if you have a vision or hearing impairment
- o The right to advance notice of room or roommate change

Information is power! If you find your rights are being violated and you would like help advocating for yourself, contact your Ombudsman for free and confidential assistance.

Communication is Key

- ◆ Be **clear** what you need. Don't beat around the bush.
- ◆ Be **concise**. Keep your message short and simple.
- ◆ Provide **complete** information so the person has everything they need to understand.
- ◆ Be **courteous**, polite and friendly.
- ◆ How you say something is as important as what you say. An angry tone of voice, even when saying "please", can be taken negatively.
- ◆ Communication between others can either build bridges or create barriers.
- ◆ Good communication helps build relationships and understanding.
- ◆ Remember to show appreciation for help you receive even though staff are required to provide it.
- ◆ As my Grammy used to say: "You can catch more flies with honey than vinegar."

4 of the 7 C's of good communication were taken from: Revolution Learning and Development Ltd www.revolutionlearning.co.uk/article/the-7-cs-of-communication/

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

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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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