

OMBUDS BULLETIN

I'm a bud, you're a bud, we're Ombuds!

August 2025

A MONTHLY BULLETIN PUBLISHED THROUGH THE LOUISIANA LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Healthy Housing Is More Than Four Walls: Aging with Support—And a Sense of Belonging

Meet Penelope. At 89, she lives in a high-end assisted living community. Her apartment is beautiful, the meals gourmet, and the staff attentive. On paper, it's perfect. But Penelope feels deeply lonely. Her closest friends have passed, and her family lives across the country. "I miss my neighbors. My garden. People who knew me," she says. Despite scheduled activities, she doesn't feel connected or interested. Her environment meets her physical needs—but neglects her emotional and social ones.

What's missing? The focus was on care—but connection was overlooked.

The Takeaway: Even in the most well-appointed settings, older adults need more than services. They need: Relationships - Recognition - Routine

Housing is healthcare—but only when it supports the whole person: body, mind, and spirit.

What if someone helped Penelope: Reconnect with a local garden club? Mentor students? Host an occasion tea with her former neighbors/church members? Encourage/teach her to Zoom with family members. Help her record her oral history for family - and share, if she wishes, with residents.

Simple efforts can restore meaning and connection.

Upcoming Events

Coffee & Cases:

First Monday of the month, 9:30-11:00am

- **August 4** - Amy Sprout, Nursing Home Administrator and Dee Dee Blake, Social Worker--Processing Reports of Abuse: From Initial Report To Resolution.
- **September 8** - Michelle Lovitt, ARCH Housing: A New Model for Aging at Home
- **October 6** - Save the Date!

Topic and guest to be announced. Got suggestions? Email us!

Annie's Story: Aging in Place with Purpose

Meet Annie. She's 82 and still lives in the modest home she and her late husband bought decades ago. Her income is limited, but she qualifies for Louisiana's Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid Waiver. Volunteers installed grab bars and widened doorways. She's managing—though it's not always easy.

But Annie has something many programs can't provide:

Neighbors who care.

- A local teen takes out her trash
- A church friend brings Sunday dinner
- Annie tutors children after school

She receives help—but also gives it.

The Takeaway:

Annie's story shows what's possible when policy and people come together. This is the heart of the Older Americans Act (1965)—community-based solutions that promote dignity, autonomy, and engagement.

At its core, aging well isn't just about receiving help. It's about continuing to matter.

NORS Resource Corner

Did you miss the latest National Ombudsman Reporting System (NORS) training last month? No problem!

Check out the self-paced NORS training, updated tools, and quick-tip videos from the National Ombudsman Resource Center.

Watch the Launch Webinar that includes Q&A and real-world case examples here: [NORS Course Launch Webinar](#)

Sign up here for: [NORS Course Training](#)

Ombudsman Refresher: Do You Know?

A Quick Ombuds Reminder: Don't Announce Your Visits!

As Ombudsmen, we protect the rights of residents—and that includes protecting the integrity of our visits.

Unless you're attending a pre-scheduled care plan meeting or appointment, you are not required to inform facility staff ahead of time. In fact, unannounced visits help us see things as they really are, not just as they're prepared to appear.

You may acknowledge communication from staff, but you are not obligated to say when you're coming or whom you'll be speaking with.

And always remember: resident-directed means just that. If a resident or their family gives permission, you may share only that information with staff—and only with their consent.

Confidentiality isn't just a principle—it's a promise!

Submit any questions, suggestions, or case examples you'd like to share to the State Office at StateOmbudsman@la.gov.