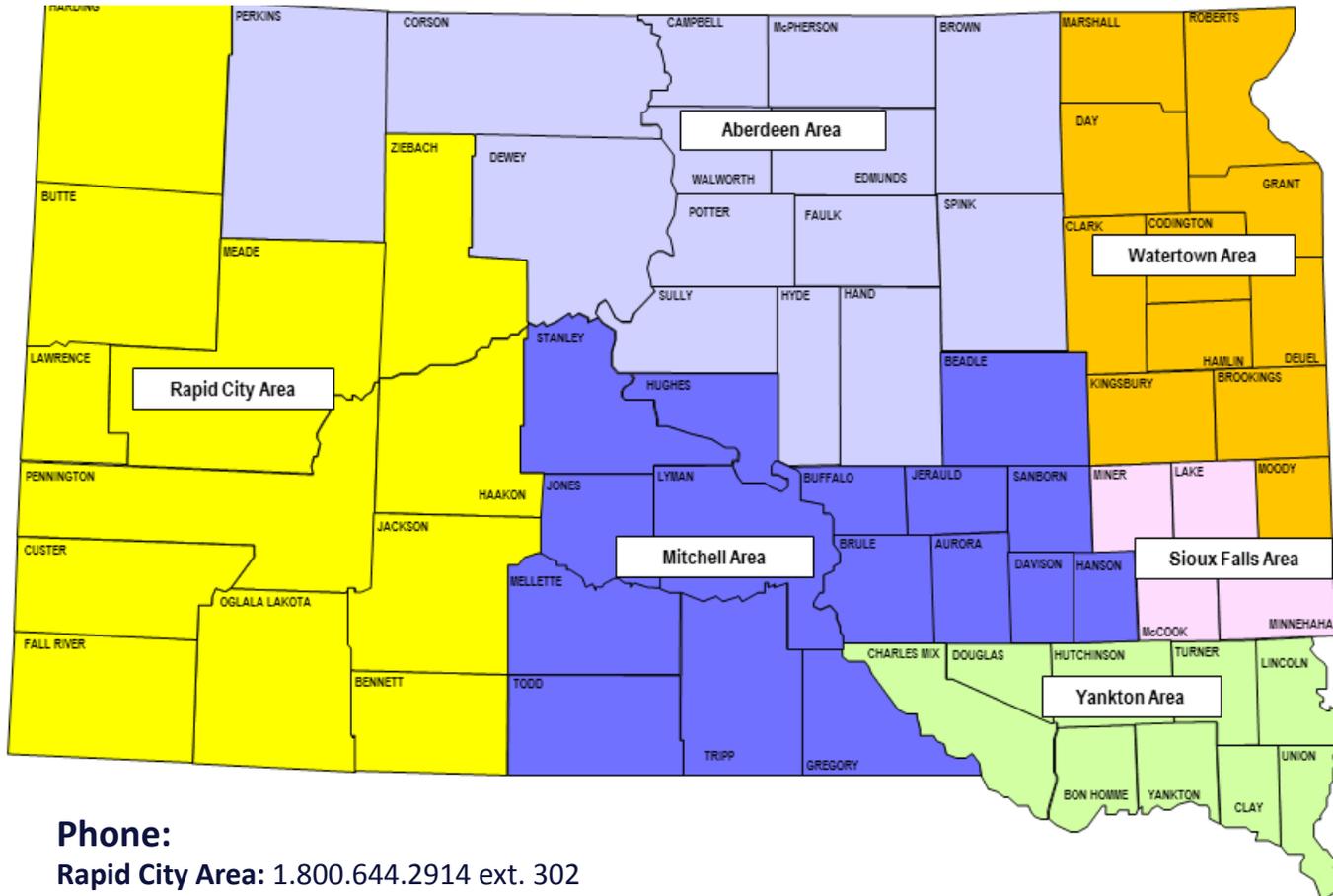


Contact Your Local Ombudsman

Ombudsman Program You have a voice!



Phone:

- Rapid City Area:** 1.800.644.2914 ext. 302
- Aberdeen Area:** 1.866.239.8855 ext. 213
- Watertown Area:** 1.866.239.6787 ext. 205
- Mitchell Area:** 1.800.231.8346 ext. 222
- Sioux Falls Area:** 1.866.801.5421 ext. 416
- Yankton Area:** 1.800.455.5241 ext. 209

Online:

dss.sd.gov/asa/services/ombudsman.aspx

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Protecting, advocating and promoting the rights of residents in long-term care facilities.

DSS 
Strong Families - South Dakota's Foundation and Our Future

What is an Ombudsman?

Ombudsman is a Swedish word meaning citizen's representative. A Long-Term Care Ombudsman is an advocate who seeks to resolve complaints on behalf of people who receive long-term care services in nursing homes, assisted living and registered residential facilities or adult foster care.

What does an Ombudsman Do?

- ✓ Receives, reviews and works to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents in long-term care facilities.
- ✓ Seeks a regular presence in all long-term care facilities.
- ✓ Provides assistance to families seeking to place a relative in a long-term care facility.
- ✓ Provides educational programs to the community and conducts in-service training to facility staff.
- ✓ Assists in developing family councils in long-term care facilities.

What are Residents' Rights?

Residents of long-term care facilities have numerous rights under federal and state law. Some of these rights, in abbreviated form, are listed below. You have the right to:

- ✓ Be informed about and exercise your rights
- ✓ Be free from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- ✓ Know about services and financial charges
- ✓ Participate in planning your care and treatment
- ✓ Confidential records
- ✓ Maintain privacy in personal matters, medical care, visits and sending or receiving mail unopened
- ✓ Control your finances
- ✓ Be free from chemical and physical restraints
- ✓ Express grievances without fear of retaliation
- ✓ Appropriate transfers and discharges, including the right to appeal
- ✓ Communicate freely with persons of your choice

How are complaints handled?

Anyone can contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to file a complaint in writing, by phone, online or in person. When you contact the office, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman will gather the details of the situation and take appropriate action to resolve the concern.

All facilities are required to display a Long-Term Care Ombudsman poster with the phone numbers for the state and local ombudsman listed on them.

A Long-Term Care Ombudsman will respond and review the complaint. If a complaint is verified, the Ombudsman will work to resolve the complaint with the resident and/or family members in addition to the facility.

The Ombudsman Program may also make referrals to the South Dakota Department of Health's Office of Licensure and Certification and the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit to investigate and resolve the identified concerns.

Ombudsman services are free and confidential.