



Contact Information

If you have additional questions about information and access to long term services and support options, contact your local Division of Adult Services and Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Connection today.

Rapid City Area Call Center
1-855-315-1986

Pierre Area Call Center
1-855-642-3055

Watertown Area Call Center
1-855-315-1987

Mitchell Area Call Center
1-855-315-1988

Sioux Falls Area Call Center
1-877-660-0301

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South Dakota Ombudsman Program

Promoting the Highest Quality of Life



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

What is the role of the Ombudsman?

The Ombudsman Program is a nationwide program administered in South Dakota by the Department of Social Services (DSS) Division of Adult Services and Aging that helps to ensure quality resident care in nursing facilities, assisted living centers and residential living centers.

The Ombudsman is an advocate whose goal is to promote the highest quality of life for residents by serving as a communication bridge between the resident and the facility.

- ✓ **Advocate:** Works on behalf of residents and may negotiate with facility staff, file complaints, or work with the nursing facility's resident council.
- ✓ **Educate:** Works to educate residents, families, friends, or potential consumers about their rights and responsibilities in a facility.

Brochures and other information are available to inform the public on their rights.

- ✓ **Investigate:** Investigates complaints and grievances to ensure that they are resolved fairly.
- ✓ **Mediate:** Serves as an impartial mediator between the resident and staff, other residents, or family members.

The Ombudsman may be a spokesperson for the resident, communicating concerns to appropriate staff or family members until a concern is resolved.

What services are provided?

The Ombudsman provides the following services:

- ✓ Distributes resident rights literature.
- ✓ Distributes posters in the facility explaining resident rights.
- ✓ Conducts resident rights in-service training to facility staff.
- ✓ Provides technical assistance to families seeking to place a relative.
- ✓ Provides general information to the community regarding resources for long-term care, resident rights, choosing a facility, Medicaid, Medicare and the Ombudsman Program.

Who can use this program?

The Ombudsman Program is for the following:

- ✓ Residents of nursing facilities, assisted living centers and residential living centers.
- ✓ Friends and relatives of residents in facilities;
- ✓ Facility staff;
- ✓ Public agencies;
- ✓ Senior citizen groups;
- ✓ Any person or group interested in the well-being of facility residents; or
- ✓ Anyone who believes conditions in a facility violate a resident's rights under state or federal law, rules or regulations may request the services of the Ombudsman Program.

How are complaints handled?

When a concern arises, the resident or family member should visit with facility staff to attempt to resolve the concern. If the concern is not resolved to the satisfaction of the resident, contact the state or local Ombudsman for further assistance.

All facilities are required to display an Ombudsman poster with the phone numbers for the state and local Ombudsman listed on them.

What happens after a complaint has been filed?

An Ombudsman will respond promptly and investigate the complaint. If a complaint is substantiated, the Ombudsman will work to resolve the complaint with the facility and resident or family members.

The Ombudsman Program also works with 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 identified problems. The name of an individual filing a complaint can be kept confidential, but in some instances, better results may be obtained if the complainant is identified.

Who can I contact for more information?

For more information or to file a complaint, please call the number below or contact your local Department of Social Services office.

State Office Phone:

605-773-3656 or 1-866-854-5465

Website:

dss.sd.gov/elderlyservices/services/ombudsman.asp

Email:

ASA@state.sd.us