



DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Area Agency on Aging
Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

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WHAT IS AN OMBUDSMAN



The Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Program are Federally mandated advocates who:

- Protect residents' rights
- Investigate complaints on behalf of residents
- Help educate and provide support to those who live in/looking for LTC

DRCOG'S REGION



- The DRCOG Area Agency on Aging (AAA) covers an 8-county region
- Arapahoe, Adams, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Clear Creek, Gilpin and Jefferson
- There are over 500 LTC homes in DRCOG's region- those include licensed assisted living and nursing homes

COVID'S IMPACT IN LONG TERM CARE



- On March 13, 2020, the federal and state governments locked down LTC, prohibiting visitation, and preventing family members from visiting their loved ones- this included Ombudsmen
- longstanding staff shortages were exacerbated by the absence of families, who often provided informal care and support to residents.
- Lack of oversight from both Ombudsmen and State Regulators left residents even more vulnerable

COVID'S IMPACT (CONTINUED)



- Nursing home residents make up for 16% of total COVID deaths in Colorado
- 99.5% of Colorado's nursing homes have had resident outbreaks
- 55% of Colorado's nursing homes report shortages of nurses or aids
- 92.6% of nursing home residents are vaccinated
- 93.2% of nursing home staff are vaccinated

Data Source- All nursing home data are from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Nursing Home COVID-19 Public File (<https://data.cms.gov/covid-19/covid-19-nursing-home-data>; downloaded on 3/3/2022).

WHAT WAS THE RESULT...



- During the pandemic, the number of residents experiencing pressure ulcers rose 31%
- The number of residents experiencing significant weight loss rose 49% during the pandemic
- The number of residents reporting feeling down, depressed, or hopeless rose 40% during the pandemic
- The increase in the rate of residents receiving antipsychotic medications jumped 77.5%, while the increase in the rate of residents being diagnosed with schizophrenia rose 54%.

<https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Computer-Data-and-Systems/Minimum-Data-Set-3-0-PublicReports/Minimum-Data-Set-3-0-Frequency-Report> 7 <https://data.cms.gov/covid-19/covid-19-nursing-home-data> 8
<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-19-emergency-declaration-waivers.pdf>

Currently, only data up to the second quarter of 2021 is available

IMPACT ON HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS



- Increase in hospital beds being utilized
- Limited options for rehabilitation
- Staffing has been impacted across the health care continuum
- Admission into an assisted living or nursing home is limited
- Families who opted to move their loved ones out of LTC are unable to find in-home supports are difficulty readmitting into LTC

IMPACT (CONTINUED)



- Staffing shortages continue as competition with agency and hospital staff increases
- LTC residents are often being cared for by unskilled staff
- Fewer assisted living homes are accepting Medicaid
- Impact on community-based services

THE FUTURE OF LTC



- Nursing home models need to change
- LTC homes need to be seen as part of the community
- Community based services and LTC are not mutually exclusive

