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Ombudsman program seeks local volunteers to be voices for Ohio long-term care consumers

Do you enjoy making a difference in the lives of others? Do you believe that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect? Do you want to help others make informed choices about where they live and the care they receive? If so, your Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman welcomes you as a volunteer. Apply today online at www.stepup.ohio.gov.

Ohio's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is made up of volunteers and staff who make regular visits to long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Ohio's SFY 2020-2021 operating budget included additional funds to expand the Ombudsman's statewide volunteer corps and increase the number and frequency of visits to residents. These funds have supported regional Ombudsman volunteer coordinators to recruit, train, and retain volunteers.

"Visitors help reduce residents' feelings of isolation," said Beverley Laubert, the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. "Our volunteers give residents a voice and honor their lives and experiences. They also help ensure facility staff do the same." Volunteer Ombudsman representatives observe conditions in facilities, talk to residents and family members about issues with care and services, and help them understand their rights as consumers. They can work with facility staff to resolve simple problems, and support Ombudsman staff as they investigate more complicated complaints.

Volunteer Ombudsman representatives receive extensive training to serve as advocates for long-term care consumers. Topics include problem-solving,

interviewing, the rules and laws of long-term care, and how to work with providers to honor consumers' choices.

For assistance with your or a loved one's care, or to learn more about volunteering, contact the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at 1-800-282-1206 or visit www.ombudsman.ohio.gov to find contact information for the Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program serving your community.

The Ohio Department of Aging serves and advocates for the needs of Ohioans age 60 and older, as well as their families, caregivers and communities. Programs include home and community based long-term supports and services, as well as initiatives to promote health and wellness throughout the lifespan. Visit www.aging.ohio.gov.