

State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program:

Federal law requires each state to have a Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Program headed by a State Long Term Care Ombudsman. Elder Rights Advocates, appointed by the State Long Term Care Ombudsman, receive, investigate and attempt to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents who reside in long term care facilities including homes for individual residential care, residential facilities for groups and nursing homes. Elder Rights Advocates work on behalf of the resident and his or her wishes and desires.

Ombudsman Services Include:

- Informing residents and their families of their rights;
- Resolving complaints involving anything that affects a person's life in long term care (e.g. food, call lights, care concerns);
- Providing informational services to the general public regarding the long term care industry in Nevada;
- Advocating for good individualized care;
- Education to inform residents, families, facility staff and others on a variety of issues related to aging, long term care and resident's rights;
- In-service training for long term care professionals regarding trends affecting the quality of care for seniors; and
- Provide information regarding the admission process to long term care facilities.

Nevada Revised Statutes 427A.136 states that The Administrator may direct the Ombudsman or an advocate to investigate a complaint involving a person who is less than 60 years of age. In May of 2014, Administrator, Jane Gruner, granted permission for the Ombudsman to advocate for any resident regardless of age. Since that time, the State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program has been advocating for residents of long term care facilities of any age.

Office of the Specialist for the Rights of Elderly Persons and the Community Advocate for Elder Rights:

Aging and Disability Services Division has presented an agency bill for the 2017 legislative session that expands the role of two distinct programs within Aging and Disability Services Division including the Office of the Specialist for the Rights of Elderly Persons and the Community Advocate for Elder Rights to include advocating for persons with disabilities of all ages. Currently, the law limits the advocacy to persons 60 years of age or older.

- Passage of the bill will:
 - Continue the Divisions mission to serve people across the lifespan as well as the state of Nevada's commitment to transform access to information and services through a no wrong door approach for all populations.

- Expand the role of the Specialist for the Rights of Elderly Persons which will allow for advocacy and education relating to the legal rights of persons with disabilities of all ages to include facilitating the development of legal services to assist in securing and maintaining their legal rights.
- Allow for the review of existing and proposed policies, legislation and regulations that affect persons with disabilities of all ages as well as the ability to review and analyze information relating to the nature and extent of abuse, neglect, exploitation, isolation and abandonment of persons with disabilities.
- Expand the role of the Community Advocate for Elder Rights which will allow for the coordination of resources and services available to persons with disabilities of all ages to include dissemination of information to persons with disabilities of national and local interest, including information regarding the services of the community advocate for elder rights.
- The Community Advocates are often a safety net for people who have special emergency concerns or need one time assistance. These needs are not restricted to older adults and with the current NRS, there is a gap in services for persons under 60 with a disability. This change will help to fill that gap by giving the Advocates statutory authority to provide information and advocacy to both older adults and people with disabilities.