

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman

Class Code: 051771

Pay Grade: GH

A. Purpose:

Advocate and protect the rights of residents who live in long term care facilities; identify, investigate, and resolve complaints on services received for safe resolutions; provides information and referral services to residents within these facilities; and ensure residents of long term care facilities are informed about their resident rights and options.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The **Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman** is responsible for a designated region in the Division of Long Term Services and Supports.

The **Lead Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman** is responsible for providing expert advice and training to Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman's and is responsible for a designated region in the Division of Long Term Services and Supports.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Investigate complaints regarding services in long term care facilities and ensuring residents have regular and timely access to ombudsman services.
 - a. Conducts initial complaint processing, examine all relevant facts that the complainant provides or that is revealed in documents related to the complaint.
 - b. Identify, investigate, and resolve complaints that may adversely affect the health, safety, welfare, or rights of the residents.
 - c. Communicate by telephone, in person, or through correspondence with agency employees or others who may have direct knowledge regarding a complaint.
 - d. Provide ongoing follow-up and monitoring as necessary to residents and families during and at completion of an investigation.
 - e. Advocate, mediate, investigate, and educate residents, families, facility staff, long term care providers, and community members.
 - f. Make regular and complaint visits to facilities.
 - g. Provide option planning so residents and families can make informed decisions.
2. Investigates alleged violations of residents' rights on abuse, neglect, and exploitation of residents who reside in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, board-and-care homes, and community living homes.
 - a. Coordinates intervention with law enforcement, Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, facility administrators, the state ombudsman, Department of Health, and other entities.
 - b. Works with residents, families, and staff to resolve concerns and complaints.
 - c. Serves as an advocate and resolves concerns and complaints about quality of care in facilities.
3. Provides information, training, and referral services to individuals, families, and the

public regarding Long Term Services and Supports services and issues pertinent to quality of life.

- a. Provides information on regulations governing long-term care facilities.
- b. Provides in-service training on the prevention and reporting of abuse, neglect, and exploitation and other quality-of-life issues in long-term care facilities.
- c. Provides information, in-service, and involvement activities to community entities (e.g., senior centers, nursing home facilities, and service groups).
- d. Develops printed resource directories of services available for the elderly.
- e. Participates in coalitions on aging, volunteer groups, and elderly focus groups.

4. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Reports to a Lead Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman. May supervise volunteer staff.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include working with adults with a wide age range, who have mental illnesses, complex medical conditions, addiction, competency issues, poor decision making, varying stages of dementia, negative behavior issues, and dysfunctional families; determining when interventions are necessary in crisis situations; determining accurate implementation of regulations; understanding of multiple programs; and working with frustrated, angry, and emotional facility staff, residents and/or family.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include assessing the immediate safety of residents and their individual needs; selecting alternative or long-term care options; interpreting laws, rules, and written procedures governing program areas; findings of non-compliance; and when a case needs referral, how to gain approval to refer a case to higher authorities.

Decisions referred include, but are not limited to, input on possible interventions; statute or regulation interpretations; referrals to other entities; and approval of resources that would have a budgetary impact.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with residents and their families, other departmental staff, personnel from community agencies, law enforcement, judges and attorneys, health care providers, and long-term care facility staff.

H. Working Conditions:

Work may be performed in a typical office environment or in long term care facilities. May be exposed to contagious diseases. Residents may have mental illnesses, complex medical conditions, addiction, competency issues, poor decision making, varying stages of dementia, negative behavior issues, and dysfunctional families. Incumbents may be required to work flexible duty schedules which may include evening, night, holiday, and

weekend hours. Travel in specific regions or other areas of the state as needed and driving in adverse weather.

I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- principles and practices of the disciplines providing services to patients and residents in health care facilities;
- medical terminology;
- federal and state laws and regulations related to nursing homes, assisted living centers, and other covered settings;
- infection prevention;
- concepts related to residents' rights;
- confidentiality, professional, and ethical behaviors;
- basic theories, principles, and methods of social work;
- methods of assessment;
- principles and techniques of conducting interviews;
- cultural, economic, physical, social, and psychological factors that influence family dynamics and interpersonal relationships.

Skills to:

- strong organizational and computer skills that allow for the use of an information and referral database that tracks calls, consumer demographics, and data resources as well as the use of other consumer tracking methods;
- good interpersonal skills, an openness and flexibility in working with diverse groups, and enthusiasm for working collaboratively and with a team;
- listening, customer service, interviewing techniques;
- demonstrate sound judgment and responsibility;
- ability to work under pressure;
- incorporate and utilize Person Centered practices.

Ability to:

- prepare clear and concise documentation, reports, and correspondence that reflect relevant facts;
- identify risks, assess needs, and develop intervention strategies;
- provide prompt, efficient, and responsive service;
- communicate information clearly and effectively;
- establish and maintain effective and collaborative working relationships and demonstrate compassion, respect, courtesy, and tact when interacting with others;
- function calmly in situations which require a high degree of sensitivity, tact, and diplomacy;
- exercise good judgment in evaluating situations and in making decisions;
- maintain confidentiality;
- maintain consumer records and documentation per state and federal regulations;
- summarize data, prepare reports, and compose correspondence;
- gather and analyze data, reason logically and accurately, and draw valid conclusions;

- interpret and explain laws, regulations, and policies;
- actively listen, elicit needed information and communicate information effectively and accurately, both orally and in writing;
- effectively plan and organize work activities, adjust to multiple demands, and prioritize tasks to complete assignments, meet schedules and deadlines;
- assume initiative with minimal supervision;
- adjust and adapt to changing policies and procedures;
- work from various locations;
- frequent travel to coverage areas, which may include overnight;
- train and mentor others;
- understand and learn new material and responsibilities readily and expediently;
- ability to become certified and designated;
- ascertain facts by person contact, records inspection, and observations;
- work tactfully with others and maintain effective working relationships.