



CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
Department for Aging and Independent Living
Office of the Commissioner

Andy Beshear
Governor

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Eric C. Friedlander
Secretary

Victoria L. Elridge
Commissioner

August 17, 2020

To: All Licensed Long Term Care Facilities

Dear Administrator,

The Department for Aging and Independent Living fully recognizes all of the hard work you have done to ensure the safety of our Long Term Care Residents during the pandemic. As you know, the Long Term Care Ombudsman program is an integral part of caring for our seniors and those experiencing disabilities who reside in your facility. Now that we are adjusting to our “new normal” their role has become more important than ever before.

Based upon the Provider Guidance dated June 25, 2020 (found at <https://chfs.ky.gov/Pages/cvres.aspx>), long term care ombudsman are defined as an essential visitor. The guidance defines essential visitors as “A health professional engaged in a participant’s care, vendors or contractors delivering goods or services, public agency or emergency personnel conducting official duties.” Based upon this definition, Long Term Care Ombudsman shall have access to residents in a designated space that allows for social distancing and auditory privacy. As the Long Term Care Ombudsman are deemed essential visitors, their visits shall not count against residents if they are limited to a certain number of visitors per week as an infection prevention measure.

As the Long Term Care Ombudsman program is a federally funded program, long term care facilities shall adhere to guidance set forth in the Older Americans Act which allows for the Ombudsman to have private and unimpeded access to long term care facilities and residents. In an effort to balance resident’s needs and the COVID-19 pandemic, Ombudsman have obtained their own personal protective equipment and have been trained to safely don and doff the equipment. The Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman has implemented a comprehensive plan for Ombudsmen to safely visit facilities including assistive technology for the hearing impaired.

If you have any questions regarding the State Long Term Care Ombudsman program, please contact Sherry Culp at Sherry@ombuddy.org or 859-277-9215. Thank you again for your continued commitment to protecting Kentucky's seniors and being a part of TEAM KENTUCKY.

Sincerely,



Victoria Elridge
DAIL Commissioner



Adam Mather
Inspector General