

Elder Abuse in Long Term Care Facilities



Presented by
Rochelle “Shelley” Woolery
Ombudsman Coordinator

Council of Aging- Orange County

- Private, non-profit corporation dedicated to **promote adult empowerment, prevent abuse and advocate for the rights and dignity** of those experiencing health and aging challenges.
- Founded in 1973 and supported by federal and state programs, community funds, and private contributions



Long-Term Care *Ombudsman* Program

- Governed by the Older American's Act of 1978 and by California law.
- The State Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Aging administers the statewide Long-Term Care Ombudsman program through 33 Planning and Service Areas located throughout the state.
- Managed by the Council on Aging- Orange County



Long-Term Care *Ombudsman* Program

- Mission Statement:

- Making justice and human dignity a reality for all individuals who reside in long-term care facilities through advocacy, mediation, complaint-investigation and resolution

What Long-Term Care Ombudsmen Do

- **Mandated by state and federal law** to visit Orange County's licensed nursing and residential care facilities for the elderly *at least* once a month and investigate any suspected abuse or neglect
- Address ALL complaints from relatively minor complaints about cold food to more serious complaints about short staffing and inadequate medical care

Different Types of Facilities

- **Skilled Nursing Facilities:** Commonly referred to as “nursing homes,” these facilities provide skilled care under the supervision of medical professionals
- **Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly:** Also referred to as *board and care home* or *assisted living facilities*, these facilities provide housing, meals, and personal services in a family-like atmosphere. RCFE’s serve people who are no longer able to perform all their activities of daily living but who do not require medical care

Abuse in Long-Term Care Facilities

- Residents are typically very frail or disabled, and often suffer from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias... making them more vulnerable to abuse
- Offenders may be other residents, visitors (including family) or individual staff members
- May be the result of either personal characteristics (of personnel) or systemic problems (within facilities)

Types of Abuse

- Physical Abuse

- Sexual Abuse

- Verbal and Mental Abuse

- Financial Abuse

- Neglect

- Self-Neglect

- Isolation and Violations of Rights

- Institutional Abuse and Neglect

- Abduction

- Abandonment

Making a Report

- Mandated reporters are *required* to report incidents of known or suspected abuse in two ways:
 1. **By telephone immediately or as soon as practically possible** to local ombudsmen or the local law enforcement agency
AND...
 2. By written report, Department of Social Services Form (SOC form 341) **sent within two working days**

Where Reports Come From

- From mandated reporters, as well as family members and friends, other residents or victims
- May be reported during an Ombudsman's routine visits, by phone, or by office visit

Who Investigates Reports of Abuse in Facilities?

- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Local Law Enforcement
- The Department of Justice, Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse
- *Additionally*, reports are sent to the individual licensing agency responsible for licensing long-term care facilities

NOTE: Adult Protective Services (APS) accepts and investigates reports of abuse and neglect to elderly and dependent adults who live in private homes and apartments

Conducting an Investigation

- The purpose of the Ombudsman's investigation is to verify abuse and focus on victim's needs
 - Ask residents for permission to collect info
 - Interview witnesses
 - Review medical records
- It does NOT take the place of a criminal investigation

How to Contact an Ombudsman

- All licensed skilled nursing facilities and residential care facilities for the elderly are required by law to prominently display the Ombudsman poster listing our services and contact number:
 - (714) 479-0107
 - (800) 300-6222
 - Statewide Ombudsman toll free 24-hour CRISISline 1-800-231-4024

Things to Think about...

- US Census Bureau projects that California's elderly population will *nearly double* within the next 20 years— from 3.7 million to over 6.4 million
- More than 43 percent of all Americans over the age of 65 will reside in a nursing home sometime in their remaining lives.
- Nationally, one or every 20 elderly people will be a victim of neglect abuse each year
- More than two-thirds of abusers are family members

Questions and Answers....
