



State of Connecticut

DDS

Department of Developmental Services

Annual Report of the Ombudsman



Edward R. Mambruno
Ombudsman
Annual Report

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Mandate

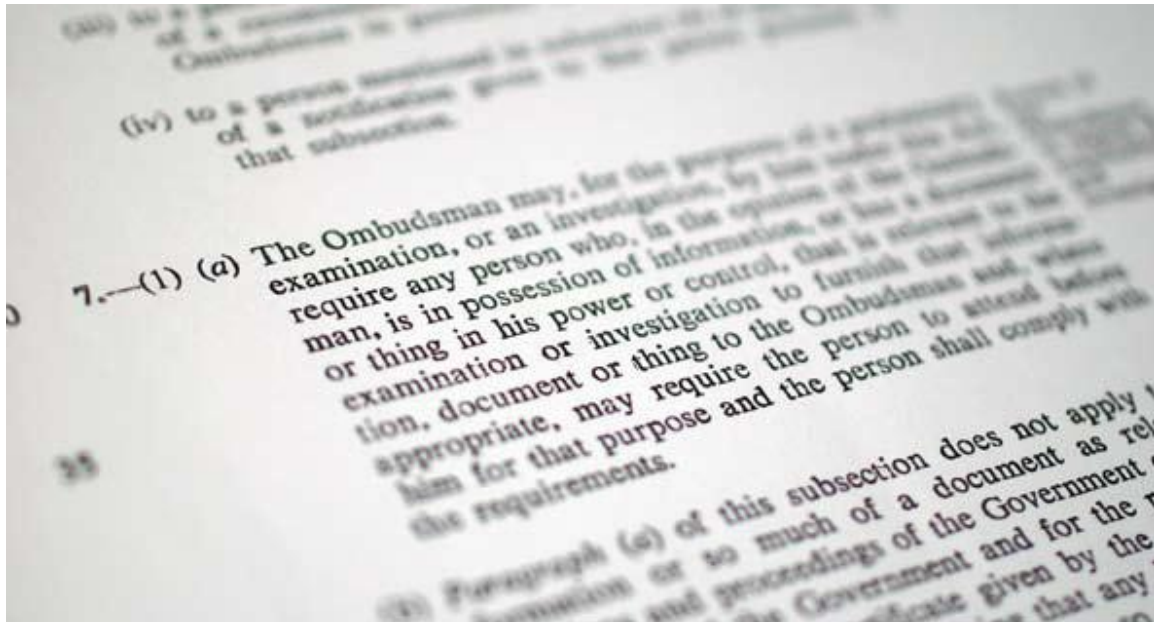
As mandated by Public Act NO. 99-271 (Sec. 17a-210a)

**I hereby submit the Annual Report of the Independent Office of
the Ombudsman for the Department of Developmental Services**

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

460 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106

What is an Ombudsman?



For the most part, an ombudsman is a designated neutral person who investigates complaints, receives and provides information, suggests referrals and helps resolve concerns or conflicts for consumers and/or their families who are eligible to receive services and supports from the Department of Developmental Services.

This preferred method of resolution has witnessed a dramatic growth when compared to legal action due to its cost-effectiveness. It is currently being implemented by states, government agencies, higher education and the private sector.

The word *ombudsman* is a Swedish word meaning "agent, representative, attorney, solicitor, deputy, proxy or delegate" of the people. There are many different ways to say the term.

Some of the most common are:

- Ombuds
- Ombudsman
- Ombudsperson

Introduction to the Ombudsman



I am Edward R. Mambruno, the Ombudsman for the State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS). I am a graduate of the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and a Master of Public Affairs Degree.

During my tenure in state service, I have been instrumental in the development and implementation of bills protecting, empowering and improving the lives of persons with developmental disabilities in the State of Connecticut.

Additionally, I have served and continue to serve on various boards and committees that improve policy for people with disabilities. Some include the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the Office of Protection and Advocacy Board for persons with disabilities, the Developmental Disability Council, and the Department of Social Services Disability Council.

I served on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) for two full terms. This national appointment is bestowed on only twenty-one individuals in the nation. I was nominated by the PCPID Chairwoman to Chair the PCPID sub-committee on Employment. I Chaired for two years and was a member of the subcommittee for Dental Care during my last term.

In 2002, I was nominated to serve as a Commissioner for the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). I am currently serving as Secretary of CHRO and perceive my role on this commission as an opportunity to serve as a watchdog for the human rights of persons with disabilities throughout Connecticut.

I have served as the State of Connecticut Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator and legislative liaison for disability policy for the Governor's Office. In this capacity, I lobbied for legislation that would help improve and empower individuals with disabilities.

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Role and Mission of the Ombudsman

My role as the DDS Ombudsman is to safeguard the rights, independence, dignity and equality of people with intellectual disabilities who receive services from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

The Independent Office of the Ombudsman for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) follows The Ombudsman Association (TOA) code of ethics and core principles. The principles adhere to **neutrality**, **confidentiality**, and **independence**.

The mission of the Ombudsman is to work on behalf of consumers and their families addressing complaints and/or problems regarding access to services or equity in treatment. The Independent Office of the Ombudsman, hereinafter referred to as the *Office*, makes recommendations to the DDS Commissioner after noting that systemic changes can and would assist in the resolution of complaints affecting consumers under the care or supervision of the department or of any public or private agency with which the department has contracted for the provision of services.

The Independent Office of the Ombudsman

The Independent Office of the Ombudsman was established on June 29, 2001 in accordance with Public Act NO. 99-271 (Sec.17a-210a).

The Office is located within the Central Office of the State Department of Developmental Services (DDS) in Hartford, Connecticut. The proximity and familiarity with CO Directors, Regional Directors and staff allows for direct access to information needed for each individual review. This collaboration achieves improved advocacy for individuals and their families. The Office maintains a strong policy of confidentiality and consumer protection and informs individuals and their families of the role the DDS Ombudsman has in resolving concerns and issues with the department.

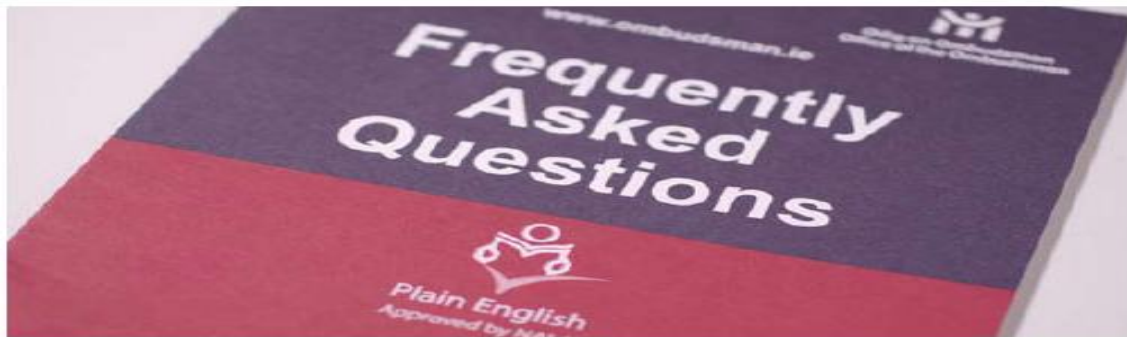
The Department of Developmental Services consists of three regional offices: the North, South, and West Region which includes the Southbury Training School. The DDS provides approximately 19,000 consumers with supports and/or services. The Office of the Ombudsman receives referrals through consumers and their families, DDS Councils, legislative inquiries, DDS case managers, DDS newsletters, 2-1-1 info-line, and agency referrals, to name a few.

Cases are resolved or closed by researching and investigating specific complaints referred to the Office. Most times, this requires collaborating with CO staff, DDS regional staff and other state agencies that may be involved with the issue in an ancillary capacity. Once the Office has concluded its investigation into a complaint, the findings are then communicated back to the individual who issued the complaint.

The Office is mandated to assist only individuals who are eligible for DDS services and is prohibited from addressing employee or labor grievances.

The advocacy provided by the Office can prove to be a valuable resource to consumers and families especially during these difficult times.

Filing a Complaint



What *Services* can I complain about?

- Any services offered, contracted or overseen by The Department of Developmental Services including its regions and providers.

What *Issues* can I complain about?

- Equity in treatment
- Any issues/problems involving DDS consumers

What the Ombudsman **CANNOT** assist with:

The Ombudsman **CANNOT**

- Address complaints that are part of formal litigation or formal grievance procedures or investigations already underway.
- Give formal legal notice to the DDS regarding grievances, complaints or concerns.
- Address concerns from employees of the DDS.
- Testify in formal or legal actions.
- Conduct formal investigations.

When should I complain?

Before you make your complaint, you should try and solve your problem with the parties concerned...

- Talk to the Case Manager, if still unresolved
- Talk to the Case Supervisor, if still dissatisfied
- Meet with the Assistant and or the Regional Director, if none of the above helps
- Contact the Office of the Ombudsman

Where do I make a complaint?

Contact the Office

- Fax: 860-418-8707
- Phone: 860-418-6047 (local) & 866-737-0331 (toll free)
- E-mail: ed.mambruno@ct.gov
- Website: <http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/ombudsperson/ombudform.pdf>
- Correspondence: 460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
- In person: Please call to schedule an appointment

How long will the process take?

- Depending on the complexity of the issue, the Office will try to resolve your complaint in 7-10 business days

Skilled Nursing Facility Review Form

The Office collaborated with OBRA coordinators to discuss and implement the standardization of a nursing home review checklist to use when reviewing DDS consumers residing in Skilled Nursing Facilities.

SAMPLE

Below is a *sample* of the checklist used when visiting a DDS consumer

Nursing Home Review

Date: _____
Client Name: _____
Nursing Home: _____
DDS Case Manager: _____
Contact Person: _____

- Is the DDS contact information available in the individual's chart?
- What is the Head Nurse's understanding of the DNR status for the individual?
- Does the DNR status match with DDS information?
- Are PRN meds being used for agitation?
- Are there any recent Incident Reports?
- Is DDS aware of the incidents if any?
- How does the DDS client feel about this placement? Is it appropriate?
- Has consumer-consumed liquids recently; is there a pitcher and cup within 7reach?
- Does the DDS client receive visits from their case manager?
- Does DDS client have a Preadmission MI/MR Identification Screen in file?
- Wheelchair user. Does individual stay in chair all day? Appropriate seating?
- How much time is spent in their wheelchair each day? Is seat cushion check for proper inflation?
- Where does the person spend most of their day?
- Is there a history of pressure sores? Was treatment Hospital or Staff?
- Is the use of Physical Therapy on contract? If not, how is it paid? (Medicare)
- How much time is spent on staff training versus routine training for individual needs?
- Does the individual have a Day Program?
- Is the individual referred to PRAT for Day Program?

Additional comments:

Ombudsman Complaint Form

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/ombudsperson/ombudform.pdf>

English link

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/ombudsperson/ombudformes.pdf>

Spanish link

A confidential link is provided in both English & Spanish on the Ombudsman's website where an individual can make a written complaint.

Below is what an individual will see when the link is opened.

Complaints/Concerns for the Ombudsperson

All fields are optional except Name and Complaint/Concern. You may enter your full name, or use only your first name or initials, however you feel comfortable. Remember to include at least one contact method so that we may respond to your concern.

Name:

Email:

Telephone 1:

Telephone 2:

Street:

Street 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Complaint/

-End-

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