

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Connecticut LongTermCare
Ombudsman Program



A Word from the State Ombudsman

Federal Fiscal Year 2025 was marked by both urgency and progress for individuals receiving long term services and supports in Connecticut. The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman continued its core work of responding to complaints, supporting residents and families during moments of uncertainty, and advocating for remedies grounded in person centered care and resident direction.

This year reinforced several recurring realities. Staffing pressures and system strain continue to show up in the daily experiences of residents, particularly in areas tied to care delivery, dignity, and timely response. Facility closures and transitions heightened the importance of discharge planning, informed choice, and careful coordination to reduce transfer trauma. Across settings, fear of retaliation remains a meaningful barrier that can prevent individuals and families from raising concerns, seeking assistance, or participating fully in shared problem solving.

At the same time, the 2025 legislative session produced meaningful reforms that align closely with resident experience and Ombudsman priorities, including strengthened protections against discrimination, enhanced discharge and transfer requirements, greater attention to emergency planning, and expanded oversight tools. The year also demonstrated the importance of supporting residents not only in exercising rights individually, but also in shaping legislative priorities through their collective advocacy. This report reflects the scope of Ombudsman work during FFY2025. It documents complaint patterns, program activity, legislative and systems advocacy, and the broader issues that shaped the year. It also recognizes the critical role of residents, families, Volunteer Resident Advocates, resident leaders, partner agencies, policymakers, and Ombudsman staff in advancing resident rights and quality of life.

Looking ahead, implementation of new protections and continued system transition will require strong education, monitoring, coordination, and sufficient capacity to respond to the needs of individuals receiving long term services and supports across settings. The LTCOP remains committed to protecting health, safety, welfare, and rights while promoting dignity, choice, and self determination for every individual it serves.

Our work is never done, but each new challenge also brings an opportunity to grow. We remain committed to building more inclusive long-term care communities where every resident, regardless of background or care setting, feels empowered, respected, and heard.

As we move forward, we are committed to expanding the Community Ombudsman Program, strengthening resident councils, and promoting the important role of essential caregivers, who provide critical support during both stability and crisis.

Above all, I want to remind you that the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is here for you. Whether you have concerns about care, need help navigating transitions, or simply want to share your experiences, we are ready to listen and advocate on your behalf. Your insights continue to shape our strategies and guide our advocacy, ensuring that resident voices remain at the center of everything we do.

Thank you to the residents, families, staff, volunteers, and partners who have contributed to this program's success. Together, we will continue working toward a more compassionate and responsive long-term care system in Connecticut, where dignity, respect, and choice remain at the forefront of every decision.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mairead Painter".

Mairead Painter

Connecticut State Long Term Care Ombudsman

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Overview	6
Who Makes Up the LTCOP?	7
Operating Budget	8
Updates & Activities	9
Bringing Individuals to the Forefront.....	12
Supporting Individuals to Shape Legislation.....	15
Data Collected & Analyzed	18
Problems Experienced & Complaints Made	19
Successes & Barriers	20
Challenges, Opportunities, & Recommendations	23
Policy, Regulatory, & Legislative Recommendations	27
Key Legislative Measures Enacted During the 2025 Session	28
Looking Ahead: Legislative Policy Priorities for 2026	31
National and Systems Advocacy Activities	33
Closures, Evacuations, and Transitions	34
Closing Statement & Acknowledgments	37

Executive Summary

The following information provides a high-level summary of the overall 2025 Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) Annual Report:

- The Office of the State Ombudsman offered advocacy services to individuals residing in Connecticut nursing homes, residential care homes, and managed residential communities receiving assisted living services, settings representing an estimated statewide capacity of more than 32,000 beds and assisted living units.
- During FFY2025, the Office of the State Ombudsman received 3,253 complaints and closed 1,926 cases across all settings served.
- Of the complaints received, the most frequently reported issues related to Care, with 913 complaints or 28.07 percent; Autonomy, Choice, and Rights, with 473 complaints or 14.54 percent; and Admission, Transfer, Discharge, and Eviction, with 472 complaints or 14.51 percent. These patterns underscore ongoing needs for timely response to resident requests, person centered care planning, dignity and respect, and safeguards during discharges and relocations.
- In addition to complaint investigation and resolution work, the Program delivered 3,304 instances of information and assistance to individuals, 484 instances of information and assistance to facility staff, and 65 community education activities statewide. Ombudsman representatives also conducted 15 training sessions for facility staff.
- During FFY2025, Ombudsman representatives completed one or more visits to 341 facilities and conducted a total of 1,721 visits across nursing facilities and residential care communities. The Program participated in 128 facility surveys and supported resident and family council engagement through 137 resident council participations and 8 family council participations.

- A primary training initiative during FFY2025 focused on updated transfer and discharge requirements for nursing homes and residential care homes, including portal submission expectations, resident notice requirements, appeal protections, and discharge planning responsibilities. Training and education efforts also included multi agency regional sessions and follow up meetings focused on Home and Community Based Services supports, residential care homes, and waiver related requirements and processes.
- The LTCOP supported residents impacted by four nursing facility closures, one residential care home closure, and three evacuation events during the reporting period. These events reinforced the importance of informed choice, continuity of relationships, proximity to known supports, and coordinated resident centered transition planning.
- The Community Ombudsman Program continued to expand its limited scope activities by completing 46 Community Ombudsman education sessions and providing individualized information and assistance to 194 individuals seeking support related to community based rights and services. Based on available staffing and appropriations, this work focused on education, navigation, warm handoffs, and connection to appropriate partners and systems rather than full case intervention in every situation.
- The LTCOP continued to support resident voice and legislative participation through the Executive Board of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils. During the 2025 legislative session, resident leaders provided testimony concerning the Personal Needs Allowance, nursing home staffing, employee and volunteer background checks, and access to effective Ombudsman advocacy.
- The 2025 Connecticut Legislative Session resulted in meaningful progress for individuals receiving long term services and supports. Key enacted measures strengthened protections against discrimination, reinforced transfer and discharge safeguards, supported emergency preparedness planning, increased regulatory accountability, and expanded certain resident opportunities and protections.
- Barriers that prevented optimal operation of the Program included continued resource limitations; fear of retaliation across long term care settings; complex discharge, transfer, and placement concerns; closures and evacuations that increased demand for resident support; ongoing need for HCBS compliance and cross system coordination; and limited Community Ombudsman capacity based on staffing and available appropriations.

*The term “nursing home” also includes “skilled nursing facility.”

Overview

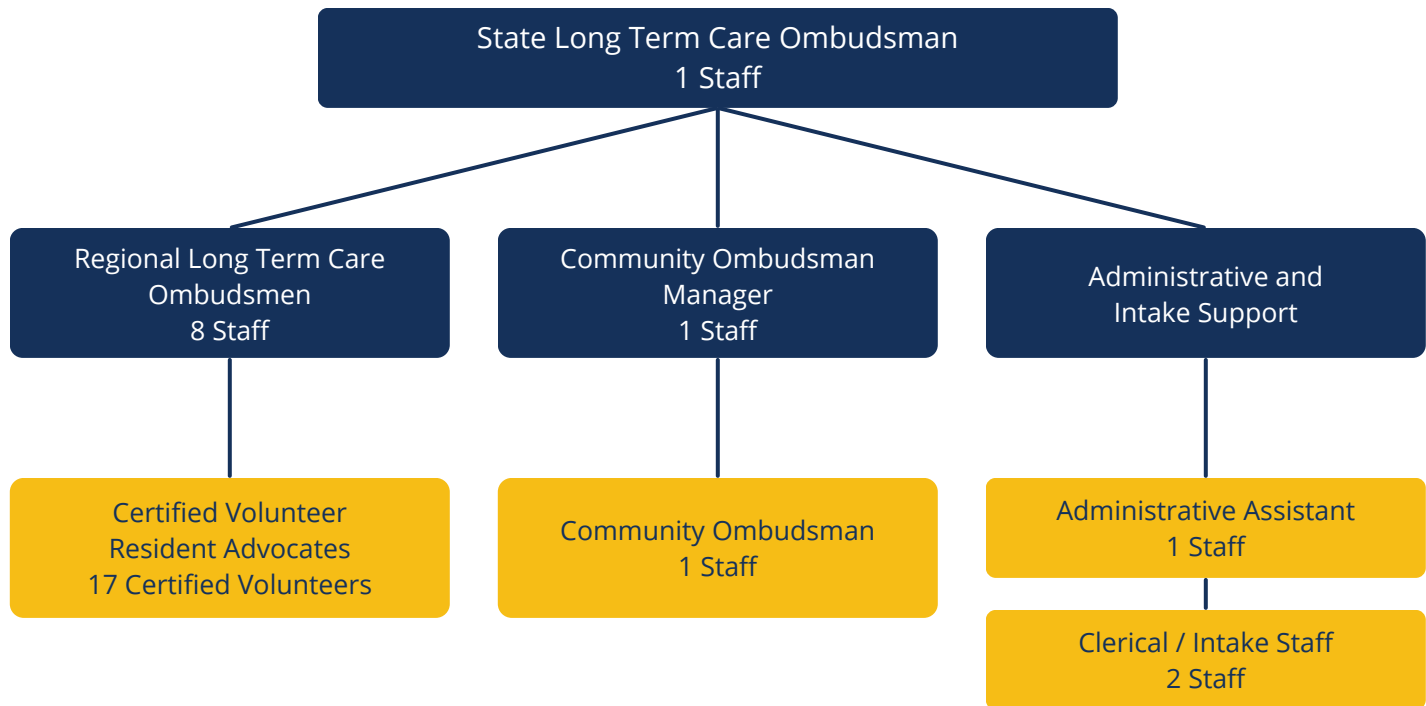
The Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) protects and promotes the health, safety, welfare, rights, and quality of life of individuals receiving long term services and supports. This is a program mandated by the Federal Older Americans Act and Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 17a-870, formerly Sec. 17b-405. The LTCOP provides advocacy for individuals living in nursing homes, residential care homes, and managed residential communities receiving assisted living services. Through the developing Community Ombudsman Program, the Office also provides limited scope education, information and assistance, navigation, and coordination related to individuals receiving home and community based long term services and supports.

During FFY2025, the LTCOP consisted of one State Ombudsman, one Community Ombudsman Manager, eight Regional Long Term Care Ombudsmen, one Community Ombudsman, one Administrative Assistant, two Clerical/Intake Staff, and a group of volunteers known as Volunteer Resident Advocates. Staffing levels remained stable year over year. As of September 30, 2025, the Program had 17 Certified Volunteer Resident Advocates.

The LTCOP is grounded in resident direction and self determination. Ombudsman representatives investigate and seek resolution of complaints made by or on behalf of residents, provide information and assistance to residents, families, representatives, providers, and the public, and conduct routine visits to support resident access to advocacy services. The Program also brings individuals to the forefront of policy discussions by supporting Resident Councils, the Executive Board of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils, family engagement, public education, and resident participation in legislative and systems advocacy.

The State Ombudsman and Community Ombudsman Manager collaborate with state agencies, policymakers, advocacy organizations, provider associations, residents, families, and other partners to identify service gaps and advance protections at both the state and federal levels. Regional Long Term Care Ombudsmen work directly with residents in facility based settings, responding to concerns in accordance with resident direction and supporting outcomes that reflect the resident's preferences, rights, and goals. Their work extends beyond complaint investigation to include routine access visits, facility survey participation, resident and family council support, community education, training, and increased advocacy during closures, evacuations, transfers, and other periods of disruption.

Who Makes Up the LTCOP?



Volunteer Resident Advocates remain an important component of the Program's ability to promote resident engagement and access to advocacy. Trained by Ombudsman staff in resident rights and problem solving, Volunteer Resident Advocates provide a consistent presence in assigned nursing homes and assist residents in identifying concerns and seeking resolution through appropriate facility processes and Ombudsman support.

The Community Ombudsman Program remained limited in scope based on available staffing and appropriations. Its work focused on education, individualized information and assistance, navigation, warm handoffs, and coordination with partners serving individuals in the greater community. This work is increasingly interconnected with the LTCOP's facility based advocacy, as individuals may move between nursing homes, residential care homes, assisted living settings, and home and community based services during discharges, closures, transitions, or changes in support needs.

Connecticut's long term care landscape remains substantial and continues to evolve. During FFY2025, the state included 191 skilled nursing facilities with a combined capacity of 22,118 beds and 95 residential care homes with a combined capacity of 2,707 beds. Connecticut also includes managed residential communities served by assisted living service agencies, representing nearly 8,000 assisted living units or apartments based on published state reports. Together, these settings represent an estimated capacity of approximately 32,825 individuals eligible for LTCOP services. The broader home and community based services system further demonstrates the need for coordinated advocacy that follows individual rights, choice, and safety across settings.

Operating Budget Program Funding for the Ombudsman Program for FFY 2025

Listed below is the expenditure information required for the submission of the annual National Ombudsman Reporting System (NORS) report. Please note that the total reported for State Funds includes fringe benefit amounts.

The LTCOP has an
operating budget of

\$2,415,332

Federal Funds

\$477,296

\$211,156 from Older Americans Act (OAA) Title VII, Chapter 2

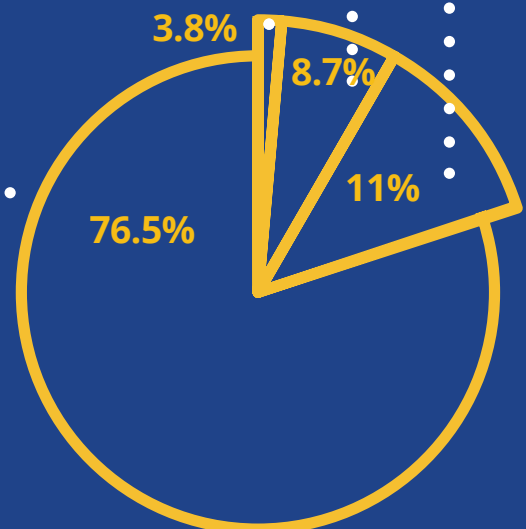
\$266,139 from OAA Title III provided at State Level

Other Federal Funds - ARP Title
VII

\$90,613

State Funds

\$1,847,422



Updates & Activities

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Connecticut LTCOP is to protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals receiving long-term services and supports by:

- Investigating complaints and concerns made by or on behalf of individuals in a timely and prompt manner.
- Bringing individuals to the forefront to voice their concerns directly to public officials on issues affecting their lives.
- Supporting individuals in their quest to shape their own legislative agenda and to represent their interests before governmental agencies.

INVESTIGATIONS, INFORMATION, AND FACILITY ACCESS

In FFY2025, the LTCOP continued to provide resident directed advocacy through complaint investigation, information and assistance, routine facility access, education, training, and coordination during transitions and emergencies. In addition to closing 1,926 cases, the Program provided 3,304 instances of information and assistance to individuals, 484 instances of information and assistance to facility staff, and completed 65 community education activities statewide.

The Program maintained a strong presence in nursing facilities and residential care communities. Ombudsman representatives completed one or more visits to 341 facilities, including 183 nursing facilities and 158 residential care communities, and conducted a total of 1,721 visits across both settings. Routine access was provided in 215 facilities, including 130 nursing facilities and 85 residential care communities. The Program also participated in 128 facility surveys, including 123 nursing facility surveys and 5 residential care community surveys.

The LTCOP continued to support resident and family engagement within care settings. Ombudsman representatives participated in 137 resident council activities, including 130 in nursing facilities and 7 in residential care communities, and participated in 8 family council activities, including 7 in nursing facilities and 1 in a residential care community.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES

During FFY2025, Ombudsman representatives conducted 15 training sessions for facility staff, including 5 sessions for nursing facility staff and 10 sessions for residential care community staff. A primary training initiative focused on updated transfer and discharge requirements for both nursing homes and residential care homes.

Training for nursing homes addressed federal guidance and LTCOP portal updates related to transfer and discharge protections, including CMS QSO-25-14-NH. Training for residential care homes addressed notice, portal submission, placement, and appeal requirements under Public Acts 22-58 and 25-16. This work supported greater understanding of the procedural rights that protect residents during proposed involuntary transfers and discharges.

The Program's training and education efforts also included a series of multi agency regional trainings offered throughout the state, with multiple regional follow up meetings focused on Home and Community Based Services supports, residential care homes, and waiver related requirements and processes. These sessions were designed to strengthen cross system understanding and coordination where discharge planning, HCBS compliance, and access to community based services directly affect resident choice, stability, and quality of life.

COMMUNITY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Connecticut's home and community based services system supports thousands of individuals statewide through Medicaid waiver programs and related long term services and supports. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders served 15,643 older adults statewide, and the Connecticut Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities had 76 active participants. Additional programs included the Katie Beckett Waiver, with 320 enrollees; Acquired Brain Injury Waivers I and II, serving 542 individuals; and the Personal Care Assistant Waiver, serving 1,060 individuals. Over SFY2025, Money Follows the Person supported 443 individuals in transitioning from nursing facilities to the community, with 402 individuals receiving enhanced federal match. During SFY2025, approximately 7,000 Medicaid members accessed services through Community First Choice.

The Community Ombudsman Program remained a limited scope initiative based on available staffing and appropriations. During the reporting period, the Program completed 46 education sessions statewide with stakeholders and partners, including access agencies, senior centers, care partners, and related organizations. The Program also continued quarterly meetings with homecare trade associations and provided individualized information and assistance to 194 individuals seeking support related to community based rights and services.

3,253

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

1,926

CASES WERE CLOSED

3,304

INFO AND CONSULTS TO
INDIVIDUALS

484

INFO AND CONSULTS TO
FACILITY STAFF

Because the Community Ombudsman Program remained limited in capacity, this work focused on education, navigation, warm handoffs, and coordination with appropriate partners and systems rather than full case intervention in every situation. At the same time, the work demonstrated increasing overlap between facility based and community based advocacy. Individuals may move between nursing homes, residential care homes, assisted living settings, and community based services during discharges, closures, relocations, or changes in support needs. This creates opportunities for coordinated advocacy and underscores the interconnectedness of rights and services across the long term care continuum.

Bringing Individuals To The Forefront

The 29th Annual Voices Forum



The Annual VOICES Forum, held on October 3, 2025, embraced the theme “Stand With Me.” The forum continued the longstanding partnership between the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils and the Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program to bring nursing home residents together with advocates, policymakers, state agency leaders, and community partners. The event reinforced a central principle of the Ombudsman Program’s mission: residents must have meaningful opportunities to identify concerns, exercise their rights, and shape the policies and systems that affect their daily lives.

The forum opened with resident leadership at the forefront. John Banks, Resident Council President from the Connecticut Veterans Home, led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mairead Painter, State Long Term Care Ombudsman, welcomed participants, and Amy Porter, Commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability Services, provided opening remarks affirming the importance of listening to residents and supporting their voices as a foundation for meaningful systems change.

This year’s forum also connected Connecticut residents to the broader history of resident advocacy. Lori Smetanka, Executive Director of the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care, reflected on 50 years of national advocacy on behalf of individuals living in nursing homes and other long term care settings. Her remarks emphasized that progress is built through sustained resident participation, informed advocacy, and continued commitment to quality of care and quality of life.

The forum highlighted initiatives that directly support resident participation and confidence in raising concerns. Through *Fear of Retaliation: Breaking the Silence*, attendees were encouraged to recognize the ways fear can prevent residents from speaking up about care, treatment, or quality of life concerns. The forum also featured the *Strengthening Resident Councils Pilot*, developed through the *Moving Forward Coalition*, which supports inclusive, resident directed councils equipped to engage members, raise concerns, and sustain meaningful advocacy.

Resident led legislative advocacy was another central focus of the forum. Executive Board members introduced the **Got COLA? Get Involved! Help Get the PNA Raised!** campaign, which invited residents statewide to describe how the current \$75 Personal Needs Allowance affects their ability to purchase personal items and services and how an increase tied to the cost of living would improve daily life and well being. The initiative built upon advocacy undertaken during the 2025 legislative session, when resident leaders testified in support of legislation to establish cost of living adjustments for the Personal Needs Allowance. Although that legislation did not become law, the Executive Board continued to elevate the issue as a matter of dignity, choice, and quality of life.

The event included recognition of individuals whose leadership has advanced resident voice, advocacy, and quality of life in long term care. State Representative Mitch Bolinsky received the Carol Rosenwald Spirit of Advocacy Award in recognition of his continued commitment to addressing issues affecting nursing home residents and supporting resident participation in the legislative process. Jeanette Sullivan Martinez, President of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils, received the 2025 Janet Tulloch Memorial Advocacy Award. Lori Smetanka received the Brian Capshaw Rockstar Award in recognition of her national leadership and commitment to strengthening consumer voice in long term care.



The forum concluded with an open microphone and panel discussion, creating an opportunity for residents to engage directly with policymakers, regulators, and advocates regarding issues affecting their lives, including staffing, housing and placement options, and the grievance process.

The Annual VOICES Forum reflected the shared goals of the LTCOP and the Executive Board: to strengthen resident councils, reduce barriers that prevent residents from raising concerns, and ensure that resident experience informs legislative and systems advocacy. Through education, direct dialogue, and resident led initiatives such as the Personal Needs Allowance campaign, the forum provided residents with tools and opportunities to move from identifying concerns to shaping meaningful change in Connecticut's long term care system.

Resident led legislative advocacy was another central focus of the forum. Executive Board members introduced the **Got COLA? Get Involved! Help Get the PNA Raised!** campaign, which invited residents statewide to describe how the current \$75 Personal Needs Allowance affects their ability to purchase personal items and services and how an increase tied to the cost of living would improve daily life and well being. The initiative built upon advocacy undertaken during the 2025 legislative session, when resident leaders testified in support of legislation to establish cost of living adjustments for the Personal Needs Allowance. Although that legislation did not become law, the Executive Board continued to elevate the issue as a matter of dignity, choice, and quality of life.



Supporting Individuals To Shape Legislation



The LTCOP continued to support residents in shaping legislation by providing education, coordination, and opportunities for resident leaders to share their lived experience directly with policymakers. During the 2025 legislative session, members of the Executive Board of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils advanced priorities identified by nursing home residents themselves, including financial dignity, staffing, resident safety, background check protections, and access to effective Ombudsman advocacy.

A primary resident led priority during the session was the adequacy of the Personal Needs Allowance. On February 6, 2025, Executive Board President Jeanette Sullivan Martinez submitted testimony to the Aging Committee in support of H.B. 6775,

An Act Concerning Cost of Living Adjustments to Long Term Care Facility Residents' Personal Needs Allowance. Her testimony emphasized that the Personal Needs Allowance is one of the few financial resources available to many nursing home residents for personal purchases and that its value must keep pace with rising costs so residents can maintain dignity, choice, and identity in daily life.

Other Executive Board members supported related resident rights priorities during the February 6 hearing. John Balisciano Jr., Vice President of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils and Resident Council President at Apple Rehab Hewett, submitted testimony expressing support for H.B. 6775 along with legislation related to long term care employee and volunteer background checks and support for Ombudsman and service navigator capacity.



Residents still wait too long for help getting out of bed, taking a shower, or using the bathroom. These aren't rare incidents, they are daily realities.

- John Balisciano Jr.



I cannot express how it feels to finally have the chance to go out and shop, to carefully plan and prepare, to scrimp and save, to cut coupons, only to reach the checkout counter and realize that I have to put things back because I cannot afford them.

- Susan Bilansky



Pictured Above Left to Right:

Top row: John Balisciano; Resident Council President

Middle Row: John Stavolo; Resident Council Member

Bottom Row: Tasha Erskine-Jackson; Northwest Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman

Susan Bilansky, Emeritus Resident Council President at Hebrew Center and an Executive Board member, also submitted testimony addressing the Personal Needs Allowance and other bills affecting resident protections and access to advocacy. The LTCOP was represented on the Personal Needs Allowance issue through testimony from Tasha Erskine Jackson, Regional Ombudsman, who described the practical impact on residents when limited personal funds are insufficient to cover basic personal items and ordinary quality of life needs.

Resident leaders also advocated for adequate staffing. On February 20, 2025, John Balisciano Jr., Jeanette Sullivan Martinez, and Robert “Bobby” Willis submitted testimony in support of S.B. 1279, An Act Concerning Nursing Home Staffing Ratios. Their advocacy highlighted the direct relationship between adequate staffing and residents’ ability to receive timely assistance, personal care, dignity, and meaningful quality of life. These concerns are consistent with the LTCOP’s FFY2025 complaint data, in which care remained the highest complaint category and concerns related to response to requests for assistance, care planning, medications, and staffing continued to affect residents.

Although H.B. 6775 did not become law during the 2025 legislative session, the need for Personal Needs Allowance reform remained a priority identified directly by residents. Building on the testimony and advocacy conducted during 2025, the Executive Board and LTCOP continued to expand resident participation through the Got COLA? Get Involved! Help Get the PNA Raised! campaign. This statewide effort gathered resident experiences regarding how the Personal Needs Allowance affects the ability to pay for clothing, grooming, hygiene items, food, community outings, family connection, and other everyday needs associated with dignity and quality of life.

Through this work, the LTCOP supported residents in bringing their own priorities before the General Assembly and strengthened opportunities for resident experience to inform future legislative action. The continuation of Personal Needs Allowance advocacy into the next legislative session reflects the purpose of resident led systems change: legislative priorities are shaped not only by policy analysis, but by the voices of individuals most directly affected.



Pictured Above John Balisciano stands with Aging Committee Leadership and the State Long Term Care Ombudsman Mairead Painter

Data Collected & Analyzed

The Office of the State Ombudsman offered advocacy services to individuals residing in Connecticut nursing homes, residential care homes, and managed residential communities receiving assisted living services. During FFY2025, Connecticut included 191 skilled nursing facilities with a combined capacity of 22,118 beds and 95 residential care homes with a combined capacity of 2,707 beds. Connecticut also includes managed residential communities served by assisted living service agencies, representing nearly 8,000 assisted living units or apartments based on published state reports.

This year one of the largest long term care providers in the state faced significant challenges, undergoing changes in ownership and the de licensure or closure of multiple facilities. This resulted in a shift in where residents were served and ongoing education from the Ombudsmen.

During the same reporting period, the Program documented a substantial increase in information and assistance provided directly to individuals, increasing from 863 instances in FFY2024 to 3,304 instances in FFY2025. Information and assistance provided to facility staff also increased from 334 to 484, community education activities increased from 47 to 65, and facility staff training sessions increased from 4 to 15.

The Program continues to experience significant demand for information, education, navigation, resident support, and systems coordination. The LTCOP provided outreach, information, complaint resolution, and transition support to residents regardless of provider and will continue monitoring how ownership changes, closures, relocations, and expanded education efforts affect complaint patterns and case volume in future reporting years.

IN 2025, THE STAFF WERE ENGAGED WITH THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

3,253 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

1,926 CASES CLOSED

341 FACILITIES RECEIVED ONE OR MORE VISITS

3,304 CONSULTATIONS PROVIDED FOR INDIVIDUALS

128 LICENSURE & CERTIFICATION SURVEY RESPONDENTS

65 COMMUNITY EDUCATION PRESENTATIONS

15 TRAININGS TO FACILITY STAFF

4 NURSING HOME CLOSURES

1 RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME CLOSURES

Problems Experienced & Complaints Made

Of the complaints received in FFY2025, the highest category of complaints was related to Care, which accounted for 913 complaints, or 28.07 percent of all complaints. Within this category, the most frequently reported concerns included medications, with 166 complaints; response to requests for assistance, with 138 complaints; and care planning, with 125 complaints. These complaints often reflect the importance of timely staff response, individualized attention, and meaningful participation in care planning. When residents do not receive timely assistance or do not believe their stated needs and preferences are reflected in their care, the impact is experienced not only as a care concern, but also as a matter of dignity and quality of life.

The second highest category was Autonomy, Choice, and Rights, which accounted for 473 complaints, or 14.54 percent of all complaints. Within this category, dignity and respect accounted for 119 complaints, living in a less restrictive setting accounted for 109 complaints, and other rights and preferences accounted for 78 complaints. These concerns reinforce the importance of resident direction, respect for individual preferences, access to community based options where appropriate, and environments where residents can raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

The third highest category was Admission, Transfer, Discharge, and Eviction, which accounted for 472 complaints, or 14.51 percent of all complaints. Discharge or eviction concerns represented 330 complaints within this category, while appeal process concerns represented 67 complaints. These concerns remained particularly significant during a year that included multiple facility closures and evacuation events, as well as expanded state and federal requirements regarding transfer and discharge notices.

During FFY2025, the LTCOP placed particular focus on education and systems coordination concerning discharge rights and responsibilities. Training for nursing homes addressed updated federal guidance and portal expectations related to transfer and discharge notices. Training for residential care homes addressed notice, portal submission, placement, and appeal requirements under Public Acts 22-58 and 25-16. These efforts reflect the Program's ongoing commitment to ensuring that individuals understand their rights during proposed discharges and that the protections established in law are implemented in practice.

Successes & Barriers

SUCCESSES IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO RESIDENTS OF LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES IN 2025:

Resident Voice and Legislative Participation

The LTCOP continued to support resident led advocacy through the Executive Board of the Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils. Resident leaders presented testimony concerning the Personal Needs Allowance, staffing, employee and volunteer background checks, and the importance of effective Ombudsman advocacy. Through the VOICES Forum and the Got COLA campaign, residents continued to identify and elevate policy priorities affecting dignity, choice, and daily quality of life.

Education on Discharge Rights and HCBS Supports

The LTCOP provided training and education concerning updated transfer and discharge requirements for nursing homes and residential care homes. The Program also conducted multi agency regional trainings and follow up meetings focused on HCBS supports, residential care homes, and waiver related requirements and processes. This work supported improved coordination and understanding of resident rights during discharges, transitions, and efforts to access community based supports.

Support During Closures and Evacuations

The LTCOP continued its active role in supporting residents impacted by closures and evacuations. During FFY2025, the Program supported residents affected by four nursing facility closures, one residential care home closure, and three evacuation events. Ombudsman representatives worked to support resident voice, informed choice, continuity of known supports, and safe transitions during periods of significant disruption.

Community Ombudsman Navigation and Warm Handoffs

The Community Ombudsman Program continued to provide limited scope education, information and assistance, navigation, and coordination related to community based long term services and supports. In one case, the Community Ombudsman assisted an individual who had been discharged from a residential care home and was struggling in the community without appropriate services or active Medicaid coverage. Through coordination with DSS and residential care providers, benefits were restored and a suitable residential placement was secured.

In another case, the Community Ombudsman worked with a Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman to locate an individual residing in a nursing facility after family members were unable to locate her. The Ombudsman supported the family regarding resident rights, visitation, and conservatorship concerns and assisted with connection to Money Follows the Person to pursue community reintegration.

Together, these examples demonstrate how Ombudsman work increasingly spans settings and transitions, supporting individuals and families as they move between facility based care and community based services.

Legislative Progress in Resident Protections

The 2025 legislative session resulted in meaningful advancement of protections relevant to individuals receiving long term services and supports. New laws strengthened protections against discrimination, reinforced discharge and transfer safeguards, required additional attention to emergency preparedness and closure transitions, and expanded oversight tools affecting long term care providers.

BARRIERS THAT PREVENTED OPTIMAL OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM IN 2025: Resource

Limitations and Expanding Responsibilities

The scope and complexity of Ombudsman work continues to expand across nursing homes, residential care homes, assisted living settings, and community based long term services and supports. Resident concerns related to care, rights, discharges, closures, and transitions require significant time, coordination, and specialized advocacy. Available staffing and resources limit the Program's ability to provide the level of ongoing access and response needed across all settings.

Fear of Retaliation

Fear of retaliation remained a significant barrier for individuals seeking to raise concerns about care, services, treatment, or quality of life. Residents may fear overt punishment or more subtle changes in treatment, responsiveness, relationships, or placement stability. This issue extends beyond nursing homes and reinforces the need for updated education, staff training, and safe complaint pathways across long term care settings.

Facility Closures, Evacuations, and Transfer Trauma

Closures and evacuations placed additional demands on the Program and created significant challenges for residents. Relocations disrupt relationships, routines, proximity to family, and continuity of services. These events reinforce the need for stronger emergency preparedness, coordinated discharge planning, and person centered transition support.

Limited Community Ombudsman Capacity

The Community Ombudsman Program continued to identify substantial need for education, navigation, and support among individuals receiving services in the greater community. However, limited staffing and appropriations restricted the Program's ability to provide full case intervention in every situation. This remains a barrier to realizing the full legislative vision of community based Ombudsman advocacy.

Challenges, Opportunities, & Recommendations

EXPANDED TRANSFER AND DISCHARGE NOTICE RESPONSIBILITIES

CHALLENGE

Transfer and discharge concerns remained a significant issue for residents during FFY2025, accounting for 472 complaints, or 14.51 percent of all complaints received by the Program. These concerns occurred during a year that also included multiple closures and evacuations, reinforcing the importance of timely notice, informed choice, appeal rights, and coordinated transition planning.

Recent state and federal requirements have expanded LTCOP responsibilities related to transfer and discharge notices. Connecticut requirements established and strengthened electronic portal submission and resident protections related to proposed involuntary transfers and discharges. Public Act 25-16 further strengthened protections for residential care home residents by requiring additional notice information, same day portal submission verification, new appeal protections if a proposed discharge location changes, and consideration of proximity to family and known support networks. Updated federal guidance also reinforced expectations related to nursing facility transfer and discharge notice submission to the State Long Term Care Ombudsman.

The LTCOP's development and use of the discharge portal positioned the Program to respond to expanded protections and identify trends related to transfers and discharges. At the same time, the work associated with receiving, reviewing, responding to, and tracking notices is legally and administratively complex. Residents facing involuntary transfer or discharge may need information regarding notice validity, appeal rights, discharge planning, proposed placement, proximity to supports, access to records, and connection to legal or community resources. Complex cases may also require coordination with multiple state and federal partners while maintaining resident direction, confidentiality, and required reporting standards.

OPPORTUNITY

The discharge portal provides Connecticut with an important foundation for improving transparency, early intervention, and systems analysis related to involuntary transfers and discharges. By receiving notices earlier and in a consistent format, the LTCOP is better positioned to identify residents who may need timely assistance, monitor compliance trends, support appeal rights, and analyze patterns connected to closures, placement barriers, and discharge planning.

RECOMMENDATION

The LTCOP recommends continued investment in the staffing, data systems, and operational resources necessary to fulfill expanded transfer and discharge responsibilities. These resources should support timely review of portal submissions, resident access to information and advocacy, monitoring of notice compliance and outcomes, coordination during closures and evacuations, and analysis of discharge trends to inform future policy and regulatory improvements.

FEAR OF RETALIATION ACROSS LONG TERM CARE SETTINGS

CHALLENGE

Fear of retaliation can prevent individuals from expressing concerns, using grievance processes, requesting assistance, or contacting the Ombudsman Program. Residents may fear that speaking up will lead to less responsive care, poorer treatment, conflict, or consequences affecting their living arrangement or services.

OPPORTUNITY

The LTCOP's work on Fear of Retaliation: Breaking the Silence created an opportunity to modernize education and promote culture change across long term care settings. This work also supports future efforts to ensure that staff providing assisted living services understand how fear of retaliation affects residents and how respectful responses to complaints protect resident rights.

RECOMMENDATION

The LTCOP recommends continued development and expansion of practical, scenario based fear of retaliation education and training across nursing homes, residential care homes, and assisted living settings. Training should be supported by leadership expectations and clear complaint pathways that ensure individuals can raise concerns without negative consequence.

RESIDENT TECHNOLOGY ACCESS AND VIRTUAL MONITORING RIGHTS

CHALLENGE

Individuals living in residential care homes do not have the same clearly defined technology and virtual monitoring protections already available to nursing home residents. Without consistent protections, residents may face barriers to using technology to support communication, family connection, advocacy, and safety in their own living spaces.

OPPORTUNITY

Connecticut has an opportunity to extend resident centered technology rights to residential care home residents while preserving appropriate roommate privacy safeguards in shared spaces.

RECOMMENDATION

The LTCOP recommends legislation to establish clear virtual monitoring rights for residential care home residents, including notice and consent procedures, standard forms, privacy protections, and meaningful enforcement when a resident's lawful use of technology is obstructed.

OWNERSHIP, INVESTMENT ENTITY, AND FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

CHALLENGE

Complex ownership, management, financing, and real estate arrangements can make it difficult for residents, families, advocates, and regulators to identify responsibility when nursing homes face quality concerns, staffing instability, financial distress, or closure risk.

OPPORTUNITY

The state can build upon recent transparency and management oversight reforms by requiring additional disclosure and accountability regarding investment entity involvement, financing arrangements, asset control, and the relationship between ownership structures and resident outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

The LTCOP recommends continued legislative and regulatory attention to nursing home ownership and investment entity transparency, including review of beneficial ownership, financing and real estate relationships, operational control, financial stability protections, and the effect of ownership structures on staffing, resident care, quality, and closure risk.

COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES, WORKFORCE PREPARATION, AND CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

CHALLENGE

Individuals receiving long term services and supports in the community may rely on service systems and workers that require stronger consistency in training, accountability, and consumer protections. Limited Community Ombudsman capacity also restricts the extent of direct intervention available when individuals experience rights or service concerns in home and community based settings.

OPPORTUNITY

Continued development of the Community Ombudsman Program and stronger protections across community based services can improve education, navigation, safety, informed choice, and access to supports that allow individuals to remain in the setting they prefer.

RECOMMENDATION

The LTCOP recommends continued attention to home and community based services protections, including training and accountability standards for home care workers, transparency and resident participation regarding major assisted living fee increases, stronger Community Ombudsman capacity, and policies that support individuals in remaining safely in community settings.

While our role in nursing home closures is vital and not anything I would change, an increase in staffing for the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is needed to continue to provide the high level of support to the residents of Connecticut that we serve.

- Cynthia Scott, RO, oversaw the closure of Abbott Terrace in 2024

Policy, Regulatory, & Legislative Recommendations

A Brief Overview: The 2025 Connecticut Legislative Session

The 2025 Connecticut Legislative Session, which ran from January 8 to June 4, marked an important period for advancing protections for individuals receiving long term services and supports in Connecticut. Throughout the session, the LTCOP continued to advocate for policies that protect resident rights, improve discharge and transfer protections, strengthen transparency and accountability, and ensure that individuals are treated with dignity and fairness across care settings.

The concerns brought forward by residents, families, and advocates informed this work, particularly around the adequacy of the Personal Needs Allowance, nursing home staffing, discrimination, facility closures, emergency transitions, oversight, and access to meaningful choice. The session resulted in several important measures affecting nursing homes, residential care homes, managed residential communities, assisted living service agencies, and individuals receiving services through the broader long term services and supports system.

While implementation of these laws will require continued education, coordination, and oversight, the reforms enacted during the 2025 session represent meaningful progress toward a more transparent, responsive, and resident centered long term care system.

Key Legislative Measures Enacted During the 2025 Session

Strengthened Protections Against Discrimination in Long Term Care Facilities

Public Act 25-17 | H.B. 6913

Public Act 25-17 prohibits discrimination in long term care facilities, including nursing homes and managed residential communities providing assisted living services. The act protects residents from bullying, abuse, harassment, or differential treatment based on protected characteristics and requires facilities to prominently post a non discrimination notice informing residents of their right to file a complaint with the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman.

The act also strengthens privacy protections during physical care, protects residents from certain non therapeutic examinations, and requires cultural competency training for staff who work directly with residents. The State Ombudsman is required to establish policies and procedures for recording complaints filed by or on behalf of residents under these protections.

Expanded Protections Against Discrimination Across Health Care Settings

Public Act 25-154 | S.B. 1380

Public Act 25-154 extends non discrimination protections to licensed health care providers, including long term care providers. The act establishes discriminatory treatment by health care providers, employees, officers, or agents as a discriminatory practice under state law. Together with Public Act 25-17, this measure reinforces the expectation that individuals receiving care must be treated fairly and respectfully and provides stronger accountability when discrimination occurs in a care setting.

Enhanced Transfer, Discharge, Closure, and Evacuation Protections **Public Act 25-16 | H.B. 6771**

Public Act 25-16 includes several provisions directly affecting residents of nursing homes and residential care homes. The act strengthens discharge notice requirements for residential care home residents by requiring that notices identify the proposed discharge location and include an attestation that the notice was submitted to the Ombudsman portal on the same day it was provided to the resident. If the proposed discharge location changes after notice is issued, the resident or representative receives a new opportunity to appeal, and the discharge is stayed during that appeal period.

The act also requires nursing homes and residential care homes to consider proximity to family and known support networks when assisting residents with transfers or alternative placements. In response to ongoing concerns related to closures and emergencies, Public Act 25-16 directs the State Ombudsman, in consultation with DPH and DSS, to convene a working group to review residential care home evacuation procedures and consider stronger emergency coordination tools.

The act also strengthens placement protections for nursing home residents displaced by certain closures or anticipated closures.

Public Act 25-16 additionally establishes an Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Task Force, includes health insurance coverage requirements for clinically useful biomarker testing, and expands tuition waiver eligibility at Connecticut's regional community technical colleges to nursing home residents who have resided in a facility for at least 30 days, subject to space availability.

Greater Oversight and Regulatory Accountability **Public Act 25-96 | H.B. 6978**

Public Act 25-96 strengthens Department of Public Health authority across licensed health care facilities, including nursing homes, residential care homes, and assisted living service agencies. The act expands enforcement tools, including civil penalties for substantial violations, directed plans of correction, and restrictions on facility acquisitions following certain compliance failures. These changes provide additional mechanisms to respond when facility practices place resident health, safety, welfare, or rights at risk.

Priority Admission for Eligible Veterans

Public Act 25-15 | H.B. 6442

Public Act 25-15 establishes priority admission protections for eligible veterans seeking placement in federally contracted veterans' nursing homes. This measure supports access to specialized services for veterans and helps preserve connection to care environments responsive to their service history, needs, and community ties.

Conservatorship Practices and Representation

Public Act 25-48 | S.B. 1501

Public Act 25-48 directs the Probate Court Administrator to convene a working group to examine conservatorship practices and recommend improvements. This work is relevant for individuals in long term care settings who require representation in decisions involving care, placement, finances, visitation, or transitions between settings.

Safety and Accountability for Individuals Receiving Disability Services

Public Act 25-89 | H.B. 7108

Public Act 25-89 strengthens transparency and oversight related to abuse, neglect, and death investigations involving individuals with autism or intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Although this act extends beyond traditional facility based long term care settings, its focus on safety, accountability, and Medicaid waiver oversight is relevant to the broader continuum of long term services and supports and to the developing work of the Community Ombudsman Program.

Looking Ahead: Legislative Policy Priorities for 2026

In the next legislative session, the LTCOP will continue to focus on strengthening resident rights, improving accountability across long term care settings, and modernizing statutory protections to reflect resident experience and evolving models of care.

Priority areas include:

Strengthening transfer and discharge protections across long term care settings.

Strengthening protections against retaliation and reinforcing safe complaint pathways, including in assisted living settings.

Expanding resident technology and virtual monitoring rights in residential care homes.

Increasing accountability and transparency for nursing home ownership, management, financing, and investment entity involvement.

Strengthening resident safety during facility closures, evacuations, and transitions of care.

Supporting stronger protections, training, and accountability for individuals receiving home and community based long term services and supports.

Advancing resident informed quality measures, informed consent, and protections related to treatment and medication practices.

Aligning state law with federal resident rights standards and evolving models of care.

These priorities reflect the Ombudsman Program's continued commitment to policies that uphold dignity, safety, choice, and self determination for individuals receiving long term services and supports. They also reinforce the essential role of resident and family participation in shaping the policies and systems that directly affect their lives.

National and Systems Advocacy Activities

During FFY2025, the LTCOP continued its active role in state, national, and multi state advocacy efforts addressing issues directly affecting residents in Connecticut. This work included engagement related to essential caregivers, advocacy concerning the federal minimum staffing standard, and development of updated education resources addressing fear of retaliation.

The LTCOP also participated in the Moving Forward Coalition's Strengthening Resident Councils Pilot, which supports residents in building inclusive, resident directed councils capable of identifying shared concerns, raising issues effectively, and sustaining meaningful resident advocacy. The work reflects the LTCOP's ongoing commitment to ensuring that quality improvement efforts are informed by residents themselves. Fear of retaliation remained a significant systems issue during the year. Through the development of updated training and educational resources, the LTCOP worked to address the barriers individuals may experience when raising concerns about care, services, treatment, or daily life. This work is relevant not only in nursing homes, but across the greater long term services and supports continuum, including residential care homes, assisted living settings, and community based services.

The LTCOP's systems advocacy work continued to emphasize that resident rights require both clear legal protections and meaningful ability to exercise those protections in practice. Collaboration with national and state partners strengthens Connecticut's ability to learn from emerging practices, respond to federal policy changes, and elevate resident experience in broader long term care reform efforts.

Closures, Evacuations, and Transitions

FFY2025 included multiple facility closures and evacuation events requiring coordinated, resident directed advocacy. During closures and evacuations, the LTCOP continued its active role in supporting residents to understand their rights, identify preferences, communicate concerns, and participate in decisions affecting where they would receive care and services.

Ombudsman representatives coordinated with state agencies and facility leadership while remaining focused on resident direction, proximity to known supports, continuity of relationships, and the need to reduce transfer trauma wherever possible. The events of FFY2025 further underscored the ongoing need for coordinated emergency planning and clear resident protections during transitions.

An additional residential care home closure, Haughton Cove in Uncasville, was anticipated for October 6, 2025. Because this date falls outside the FFY2025 reporting period, it is not included in the FFY2025 closure total but reflects the continued need for transition support entering the next reporting year.

FFY2025 At a Glance:

4 SNF Closures

1 RCH Closure

3 Evacuations

0 Bankruptcies
or receiverships

Closures & Evacuations

Closures

Nursing Homes

Nursing Home and Residential Care Home Closures From 10/1/24 – 9/30/25

FACILITY NAME	TOWN	BED COUNT	DATE
ABBOTT TERRACE	WATERBURY	205	11/05/2024
MATTATUCK	WATERBURY	43	03/25/2025
COUNTRYSIDE MANOR	BRISTOL	90	03/28/2025
ST. JOSEPH'S CENTER	TRUMBULL	269	08/14/2025
TOTAL		607	

Residential Care Homes

FACILITY NAME	TOWN	BED COUNT	DATE
HOLLY VIEW MANOR	BRISTOL	16	08/01/2025
TOTAL		16	

Evacuations

Nursing Home and Residential Care Home Evacuations From 10/1/24 – 9/30/25

FACILITY NAME	TOWN	BED COUNT	DATE
AUTUMN LAKE MADISON	MADISON	17	12/23/2024
ST. JOSEPH	TRUMBULL	165	03/05/2025
ST. JOSEPH	TRUMBULL	165	05/16/2025
TOTAL		347	

Receiverships

There were no receiverships in FY 2025.

Bankruptcies

There were no bankruptcies in FY 2025.

Closing Statement & Acknowledgments

The Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program remains committed to protecting the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals receiving long term services and supports. During FFY2025, the Program continued to advance advocacy that promotes dignity, informed choice, resident direction, and person centered care across long term care settings. The year reflected both persistent system challenges and meaningful progress, including strengthened resident protections, increased focus on closures, evacuations, and transitions, and continued resident led advocacy that helped shape policy priorities.

The LTCOP extends sincere appreciation to the residents and families who shared their experiences, raised concerns, and trusted the Program to support them through difficult and often deeply personal situations. Their voices remain the foundation of the Ombudsman Program's work and continue to guide the priorities, recommendations, and advocacy described throughout this report.

We are also grateful to the Executive Board of Presidents of Resident Councils, resident council leaders, and residents across the state who continued to bring forward issues affecting daily life in long term care. Their advocacy, testimony, and participation in legislative and systems discussions demonstrate the importance of ensuring that residents are not only included in policy conversations, but are recognized as leaders in shaping the systems that affect their lives.

The Program extends appreciation to Volunteer Resident Advocates, Ombudsman staff, and intake and administrative staff whose work supports residents, families, and representatives across Connecticut. Their efforts during complaint resolution, facility visits, closures, evacuations, education, and consultation help ensure that residents have access to information, advocacy, and support when it is needed most.

The LTCOP also acknowledges the continued collaboration of state agency partners, including colleagues across the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Social Services, the Office of Policy and Management, and other state entities whose work intersects with long term services and supports. These partnerships are essential to addressing complex issues, improving coordination, and advancing policy and practice that better reflect the needs and choices of individuals receiving care.

We extend appreciation to our national, state, and community advocacy partners, including AARP, The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care, legal services partners, provider associations, consumer advocacy organizations, and community based partners. Their expertise, collaboration, and shared commitment help connect Connecticut's work to broader efforts to strengthen quality, accountability, access, and resident rights.

The Program is also grateful to legislative leaders and members of the Aging Committee, Human Services Committee, Public Health Committee, and other committees whose work affects long term care residents and individuals receiving long term services and supports. Legislative engagement during FFY2025 helped advance important conversations regarding resident rights, discrimination protections, discharge and transfer safeguards, emergency planning, access to services, and quality of life.

As Connecticut's long term care system continues to evolve, the LTCOP will remain focused on ensuring that individuals are heard, respected, informed, and supported in exercising the rights and choices that shape their lives. The Program recognizes that meaningful progress requires sustained collaboration, continued attention to resident experience, and a willingness to address both immediate concerns and long standing structural challenges.

We close this report with gratitude for the residents, families, volunteers, staff, partners, and policymakers who continue to support a more responsive, transparent, and person centered long term care system. Together, this work strengthens the protections, dignity, and self determination of individuals receiving long term services and supports across Connecticut.

Sincerely,

The Connecticut Long Term Care
Ombudsman Program

Prepared By:
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