

The Silver Panther Newsletter

SPRING EDITION

2016



Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils

Executive Board Members

Grace Bligé-Curry, Karen Hawley, Mary

DePasquale, Helen Fitch,

Charlene Paquin, Jeanette Sullivan-Martinez

In Memoriam

The Ombudsman program is sad to report that Veronica “Ronnie” Martin passed away 4/15/16 at Bayview Healthcare, surrounded by her family. She will be greatly missed in her role on the Executive Board of Resident Council Presidents. Her enthusiasm and skills are irreplaceable. Please see the short article below, written some time ago by Ronnie. Her words best depict the special type of person she was.

My Story, My Masterpiece

By Ronnie Martin

I was newly widowed when I came to live at the nursing home. At the age of 56, I could no longer live independently, having suffered from Rheumatoid Arthritis for over thirty years. Eventually, I became to accept living at the nursing home but I remained determined to avoid recreation as I imagined it (gluing together Popsicle sticks with old ladies).

One day the recreation director put out her hand and sang to me, “stop in the name of love”. She asked if I had ever painted and I answered, “No”. I figured I would humor her and try but I never suspected I would love it. Since that first art class, I have gone on to paint many pictures. I find that painting relaxes me and allows me to express myself in new ways.

This initial involvement with recreation ultimately opened the door to some of the most meaningful and enriching experiences of my life. I soon became involved with resident council and was eventually elected President. Through this position I became a resident advocate on the Executive Board and The Long Term Care Advisory Council. I became passionate about speaking out for others and myself. So many people living in nursing homes have no voice of their own due to illness or disability. I wanted to be that voice and to make a difference. The Executive board has been successful at influencing legislation to improve the quality of life for nursing home residents. I never thought I would be part of something so powerful. This work has truly been rewarding.

Every one of us has disabilities and capabilities. I never realized that I would discover new skills in a nursing home. Sometimes the changes we work for are large and system wide. Other times they are small and more personal. My change started when I picked up that paintbrush for the first time. This journey began with a painting and has become my masterpiece.

***PHOTO OF A RONNIE MARTIN'S PAINTING
WHICH WON FIRST PLACE IN THE WATERFORD SENIOR CENTER
ART SHOW IN 2014. THE PAINTING IS TITLED***

'A WALK IN THE POPPY MEADOW'



BEST PRACTICES

The media has been reporting that Connecticut residents, including those residing in nursing homes, are receiving scam calls and could become a victim of identity theft. In a recent case where a resident's social security check was compromised, she was able to take some of the suggested actions below to resolve her problem.

Suggested Actions

- File a report with your local police.
- **Department of Consumer Protection** 1-800-842-2649
- **Attorney General's office** 1-860-808-5354
- **Consumer Law Project for Elders** 1-800-296-1467 - Provides FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE to seniors 60 and older with consumer problems, including identity theft. The Hotline is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- **The Federal Trade Commission (FTC):** The FTC's Identity Theft Hotline provides information about Identity Theft 1-877-438-4338.
- **To report Identity Theft:** Contact the 3 major credit reporting agencies to place a **fraud alert** on your credit reports. A fraud alert requires you to be notified if someone attempts to obtain credit in your name. It is effective for 90 days and can be extended. To place a fraud alert on your credit reports contact any of the 3 major credit reporting agencies below.
Equifax 1-800-525-6285, www.equifax.com, PO Box 740241 Atlanta, Georgia
Experian 1-800-397-3742, www.experian.com, PO Box 9532 Allen, TX 75013
TransUnion 1-800-680-7289, www.transunion.com, Fraud Victim Assistance
Div. PO BOX 6790 Fullerton, CA 92834
- Contact the customer Service Fraud Unit of each creditor (i.e. bank, credit card company) for each account that may be affected and close those accounts. (see your monthly statement for the phone number)
- Notify the Social Security Administration Fraud Line if you believe your Social Security number is being used fraudulently by calling 1-800-269-0271.

- The Consumer Law Project for Elders provides free legal assistance to seniors 60 or over who have consumer questions or problems. You can also call **Choices** the state health insurance assistance program 1-800-994-9422.
- You can put your name on the National Registry “Do Not Call List” - 1-888-567-8688 or apply by internet <http://www.donotcall.gov> and fill out the registration form.
- You can remove your name from pre-screened credit offers by calling 1-888-567-8688 or by internet www.optoutprescreen.com

Red Flags to be Aware Of

- No one can ask you for personal information during their marketing activities. Always keep your Medicare number, social security number, credit card numbers and banking account numbers secure.
- Medicare plan representatives should only conduct marketing or sales activities in the common areas of health care settings, not in waiting rooms or exam rooms.
- If you notice charges on your Medicare statement for services you did not receive.
- A marketer asks you for cash up front before receiving the services or product.
- Incorrect withdrawals from your personal needs allowance – be sure to review your quarterly resident trust account statement from the facility business office.

If you would like to share a Best Practice that your doing at your facility, please E-mail it to:

Best Practice Committee at Michael.Michalski@ct.gov or Brenda.Torres@ct.gov or you can fax it @ 860-723-1304 or write to Ombudsman Program, State Department on Aging, 20 Meadow Road, Windsor, CT 06095.

2016 CT Legislative Session

Selected Long Term Care Bills Passed By Both Chambers

Some Bills Still Awaiting Governor Review/Signing

(as of 5/27/16)

SB 161 - Notification Regarding Penalties for Abuse and Neglect of Nursing Home Residents, Public Act 16-6, Governor Signed

To provide notification of the civil, criminal and administrative penalties for abuse and neglect of nursing home residents.

SB 166 - Utilization of Patient Caregivers at Nursing Homes, Public Act 16-59, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing

To facilitate caregiver utilization at nursing home facilities as well as hospitals to promote good discharge planning and care coordination.

SB 266 - Nursing Home Resident Admission Agreements, Public Act 16-209, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing

To give a person who signs a resident admission agreement at a nursing home a right to rescind the agreement within three business days and new agreement requirements related to responsible party.

SB 280 - Long Term Care Ombudsman's Notice to Nursing Home Residents, Public Act 16-8, Governor Signed 5/5

To provide additional information to patients from the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and the state Department of Aging on their rights and services available when a facility intends to terminate a service or substantially decrease its bed capacity.

SB 298 - Telehealth Services for Medicaid Recipients, Public Act 16-198, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing

To require the Department of Social Services to provide coverage for telehealth services to Medicaid recipients.

SB 371 - Use of Experimental Drugs for Patients With Terminal Conditions, Public Act 16-214, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing

To allow the use of investigational drugs, biological products or devices by patients with terminal conditions.

SB 392 - Adopt Special Needs Fairness Act Upon Congress Passage, Public Act 16-176, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing

To exclude for Medicaid eligibility purposes assets from a special needs trust established by a nonelderly individual with disabilities on his or her own behalf upon passage by Congress of the Special Needs Trust Fairness Act of 2015.

SB 502 - Revenue and Other Items To Implement The Budget For the Biennium Ending 6/30/17, Public Act 16-3, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing
– couple excerpts below:

For full benefit dually eligible Medicare Part D beneficiaries, DSS responsible for drug copayment which exceeds seventeen dollars in aggregate in any month and beneficiary responsible up to that amount. The Commission on Aging will be consolidated into a new Commission on Women, Children and Elderly (changed to Seniors).

HB 5356 - Veterans' Health Records, Public Act 16-109, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing

To prohibit health providers from charging for health records requested in support of claims or appeals for federal or state veterans' benefits.

HB 5416 - Labor Department and CT Veterans Advocacy and Assistance Unit, Public Act 16-68, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing - includes outreach and advocacy support requirements to/for nursing home and assisted living residents – see bill amendment

HB 5437 - Non-Emergency Medical Transportation for Medicaid Recipients, Special Act 16-8, Awaiting Governor Review/Signing

To study the cost-effectiveness and service delivery of nonemergency medical transportation services for medical assistance providers. Includes performance standards, sanctions, and required monthly report submissions to DSS Commissioner. By November 1, 2016 DSS to issue a request for proposals for this service.

HB 5450 - Palliative Use of Marijuana, Public Act 16-23, Governor Signed

To make revisions to the statutes concerning the palliative use of marijuana.

Overall, there were many long term care bill successes this session. Strong advocacy will continue next legislative session to help promote increased nursing home staffing level and increased personal needs allowance legislative proposals.

To check bill details go to www.cga.ct.gov and highlight “quick bill search” link at top of page and then insert bill # into search area at bottom of page.

Executive Board Member Takes On New Role

Jeanette Sullivan-Martinez joined the Statewide Coalition of Resident Council Presidents, also known as the Executive Board / E-Board, in June of 2014. Below, Jeanette shares her experience as being a new member of the E-Board.

Jeanette, how did you learn about the E-Board and what made you want to pursue membership?

I think the first time I heard about the E-Board I was attending a VOICES conference. I believe it was Regional Ombudsman, Dan Lerman who interviewed me on a topic for that year's Forum and he commented, "you would be great for the E-Board." It wasn't until two years later that I was approached to join the E-Board. My first introduction to the E-Board as a group was at the E-Board retreat in July 2014.

What have you learned about the challenges nursing home residents face since becoming an E-Board member?

Where do I start? The first challenge is getting people to change their mindset. We need to change the perspective of nursing homes and the people who live there to the population at large. People have to understand that nursing homes should be places where one gets to enjoy the last of their days for as long as they can.

Additionally, budgets and State government are a big deal, not to mention the budgets nursing homes set to run their business.

Another challenge is the State staffing requirement. Most nursing homes meet the State requirement, what was great 30 years ago, but the acuity and needs of residents of nursing homes has greatly changed. The layout of the nursing home and the needs of the residents should be considered when drafting staffing schedules, not just what the day's census is. For example, the long term care units versus the short-term acute care units.

Why do you like being part of the E-Board and what are some of your favorite aspects of it?

I like that E-Board members have contact with one another and that we are all facing similar challenges in our own communities. I also like that we each get to spend time talking about the fun things going on in our Home and that we get to bounce ideas off one another.

The more I participate in the E-Board, the more I realize I have so much more to learn.

How has the E-Board inspired you to make changes in your own community and what are some of the things you have done as a Resident Council President at Pendleton?

I've done a lot of things here as RC President and even before I became RC President. For example, I helped create variety in the menus because we were getting the same things all the time. I provided the Food Service department different recipes using the same ingredients they already had on the menu. For instance, instead of meatloaf, corn, and mashed potatoes, I suggested Shepard's Pie with melted cheese.

Other changes include, setting up an effective Resident Council complete with Board Members and by-laws, sitting family style in the dining room because socialization helps people eat better – this has now expanded into another unit in our community, setting up a resident store that is open one day a month, helping initiate a Family Council for family members, and we now have a vegetable garden that is wheelchair height so all residents can participate. We are hoping we will have enough tomatoes this summer to provide to the kitchen.

Recently, you have become a member of the State of CT Long Term Care Advisory Council, how do you like this new role?

Again, I feel very honored to have even been considered. I know I have big shoes to fill after Brian Capshaw and Ronnie Martin's participation – but I've been reminded that I have my own shoes to wear too.

I always keep Brian and Ronnie in the back of my mind when attending these meetings. Like them, I truly want to make a difference not only for myself but for anyone who lives in a nursing home or lives with a disability.

What do you hope to achieve as a member of the Long-Term Care Advisory Council?

I would love to see legislation change with regards to staffing. Increasing the Personal Needs Allowance would be a bonus; the icing on the cake.

ANY RESIDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT SERVING ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF RESIDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENTS...PLEASE CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM!! 1-866-388-1888

PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW VOLUNTEER RESIDENT ADVOCATES

The Ombudsman program is happy to report we have some new volunteer resident advocates (VRAs). The volunteers receive 20 hours of training from Ombudsman staff in a wide range of topics including resident rights, interviewing skills, problem solving and the health care system. Volunteers spend four hours per week visiting their assigned facility and attend monthly and annual meetings. Our volunteers have impressive lifetime experiences and skills they bring to their dedication to improving the quality of life for residents.

Our new volunteers:

Ellen Wolpin -January 2016

Barbara Fenton-January 2016

Fran Bernstein-May 2106

Evelyn Corda-May 2016

Susan LaFontaine-May 2016

If you or someone you know might be interested in learning more about the volunteer program please contact us at:

1-866-388-1888



Presidents of Resident Councils

Please Save the Date

Thursday, October 13th 2016

for

The 20th Annual VOICES Forum

at

The Aqua Turf Country Club

256 Mulberry Road

Plantsville, Connecticut

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Precipitation, Rain, Snow, Sleet, Black Ice, Cloud, Fog, Hurricane, Typhoon, Tsunami, Thunder, Lightning, Wind, Temperature, Ice Storm, Landslide, High, Low, El Nino, Atmospheric Pressure, overcast, Smog, Heatwave, Blizzard, Sunshine, Indian Summer, Tornado

**Statewide Coalition of Presidents of Resident Councils
(SCPRC)**

Executive Board Members

**Mary DePasquale
Ellis Manor Care**

**Grace Blige-Curry
Newington Health
Emeritus Member**

**Charlene Paquin
Walnut Hill**

**Helen Fitch
Valerie Manor**

**Karen Hawley
Geer Memorial Healthcare
Emeritus Member**

**Jeanette Sullivan-Martinez
Pendleton Healthcare**

NANCY B. SHAFFER - STATE LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

860- 424-5200

Desiree Pina - Administrative Assistant

860-424-5239

**CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL OMBUDSMAN TOLL FREE
NUMBER - 1-866-388-1888**

WESTERN

INTAKE NUMBER 203-597-4181

Sheila Hayden - Intake Coordinator

Regional Ombudsmen

Kim Massey, Amber Burke & Patricia Calderone

SOUTHERN

INTAKE NUMBER 860-823-3366

Stephanie Booth - Intake Coordinator

Regional Ombudsmen

Brenda Foreman, Dan Lerman & Lindsay Jesshop

NORTHERN

INTAKE NUMBER 860-424-5221

Charlene Anglin - Intake Coordinator

Regional Ombudsmen

Michael Michalski, Brenda Torres & Thomas Pantaleo



www.ltcop@ct.gov

