

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Your appointment to the Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee carries with it an important responsibility to your community and a commitment to the citizens residing in the adult care homes therein. You will be acting as a representative of your community to insure that the residents of these homes receive quality care.

Your involvement on the committee will require that you participate in various activities including training, visiting homes, talking with residents, conferences with administrators, quarterly committee meetings, complaint investigations, and report writing. The amount of time you will spend on these activities will vary from county to county depending on the number and general condition of the adult care homes in your county.

You will be trained and assisted by a Regional Ombudsman who will serve your committee as a resource person as well as provide technical and administrative support on a continuing basis.

A. **WHAT IS AN ADULT CARE HOME?**

Adult care homes are residential care facilities providing 24 hours of personal care and supervision. These homes serve a tremendously varied population in terms of the individual needs represented. Young adults as well as elderly persons, persons having quite varied preferences and tastes, and persons with wide variations in their capability for independent living are all served in adult care homes. Under the statutory definitions, adult care homes are considered a type of Assisted Living Facility. Also included under the umbrella term of "assisted living" are group homes for developmentally disabled adults and multi-unit-housing with services. Therefore, anyone viewing this type of residential service as a whole should not expect to observe the same type of residents or same kind of events occurring in each home.

The major reason for the need for adult care level of care is the great increase in numbers of disabled and dependent older people. Each year brings a net increase of about 100,000 elderly persons unable to carry on normal activities of daily living without help.

For mentally retarded adults, an extensive variety of individual needs and circumstances make an adult care home an appropriate community resource. Many of these individuals have returned to the community from institutional programs. Others, due to advances in community programs for the younger mentally retarded population, have never required institutionalization, but are still in need of supervised residential services as adults.

Adult care home residents are a particularly vulnerable population in some respects and are often reluctant to assert their own rights. Therefore, in 1981, the General Assembly passed a law creating the "Adult Care Home Residents' Bill of Rights" with the intent of promoting the interests and wellbeing of the residents in adult care homes. It is further the intent that every resident's civil and religious liberties, including the right to independent personal decisions and knowledge of available choices, shall not be infringed upon.

B. **THE ADULT HOME COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

1. Purpose of Committees

The mandates for the adult care home community advisory committee are to work to maintain the spirit of the Residents' Bill of Rights as well as promote community involvement and cooperation with adult care homes to ensure quality care for the elderly and disabled. In

carrying out its responsibilities, it will be necessary for the committees to establish linkages with the Division of Aging State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, county departments of social services and administrators of adult care homes.

Because of their work at the local level, these committees will have the opportunity to obtain a firsthand knowledge of problems in the system that regulates long-term care facilities and can work toward improving the quality and method of service delivery. Local committees forward data and pertinent information to the regional ombudsmen who forward it to the State Division of Aging. The Division compiles and evaluates this information to identify gaps and deficiencies in the long-term care system and to initiate efforts at the State level to bring about needed changes.

This training manual has been prepared by the Division of Aging in an effort to prepare the adult care home community advisory committees to work with and on behalf of our adult care home residents.

2. Establishment and Appointment of Committees

General Statute 131D-31 (see appendix) requires that each county which has at least one licensed adult care home establish an adult care home community advisory committee. The committee serves all the homes in the county, and works with each home in the best interests of the persons residing there.

The boards of county commissioners are encouraged to appoint the adult care home community advisory committees.

Of the members, not less than one-third, but as close to one-third as possible must be chosen from among persons nominated by a majority of the chief administrators of adult care homes in the county.

Minimum Qualifications for Appointment:

Each member must be a resident of the county that the committee serves. No person or immediate family member of a person with a financial interest in a home served by a committee, or employee or governing board member of a home served by a committee, or immediate family member of a resident in a home served by a committee may be a member of an adult care home community advisory committee. At least one member of each committee must be a person with knowledge of mental retardation. Special care should be taken to see that persons with the interest, the time, and the knowledge of adult care home matters are selected to serve on the committee. To the extent possible, committees should be composed of persons who represent a wide range of backgrounds.

Additional suggested criteria for selection of committee members:

- 1) Maturity;
- 2) Strong motivation to work with the elderly;
- 3) Ability to advocate;
- 4) Potential to learn to resolve problems and complaints in a constructive manner by establishing positive working relationships.

- 5) Ability to listen, observe, and resolve problems;
- 6) Availability for at least 5 hours a month to attend meetings, training sessions, and visit facilities.

Members of the committee serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed by the local county commissioners from public funds for actual expense incurred by them in the performance of their duties. Other local sources of funding for these expenses (e.g., associations, clubs, foundations, etc.) may be sought.

Any county commissioner who is appointed to the committee serves on the committee in an ex officio capacity.