



The Advocate

A Newsletter From Your Regional Ombudsman Program

SEPTEMBER 2008

Serving
Alexander,
Burke,
Caldwell,
And
Catawba
Counties

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Resident's Right to VOTE!

Whatever your own political opinions, know that residents are getting fired up to vote in the upcoming election. Let's be sure to assist them in exercising this essential component of being a citizen in the United States.

Absentee Voting

Absentee voting is comprised of two methods by which registered voters may cast ballots other than the traditional method of appearing in person and casting a ballot on the day of the election. These methods are absentee by mail and absentee one-stop.

Download the latest One-Stop Absentee voting schedule. The One-Stop list will be available soon.

Absentee by Mail

Any registered North Carolina voter can request an absentee ballot from his/her respective county board of elections prior to the last Tuesday before the election. A handwritten request from the voter or near relative* must include the following:

- Name of voter
- Residential Address of voter
- Mailing Address of voter (if different from residential address)
- Date of Birth of voter
- Signature of voter or near relative (indicate relationship with voter)

If the voter is qualified, an application and ballot will be mailed to the voter after the receipt of the written request. The voted ballot must be received in the County Board of Elections office by 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election in order to be counted.

The deadline for requesting an absentee ballot by mail or fax for any election is the day prior to Election Day. Ballots can be faxed to a number you provide on the FPCA. To request and receive faxed ballots, transmit the completed FPCA to the NC State Board of Elections by mail or fax. The secure fax line is 919-715-0351.

Questions regarding any of these procedures should be directed to the State Board of Elections at 919-733-7173 or by email at elections.sboe@ncmail.net.

*A near relative is a: spouse, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepparent or stepchild.

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ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN AMERICA'S NURSING HOMES: STAFF STABILITY

Nursing home quality means care and services that respect the individual's needs and choices, improve the likelihood of achievable clinical outcomes, and are consistent with evidence-based knowledge.

Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes is an ongoing, coalition-based campaign concerned with how we care for the elderly, chronically ill and disabled, as well as those recuperating in a nursing home environment.

Campaign leaders can include long-term care providers, consumers and advocates, nurses, health care professionals, medical directors and health care administrators, caregiver/support staff, and government agencies, foundations and other quality focused organizations. You are invited to participate in a technical assistance webinar addressing Staff Stability where you will learn to manage your resources and improve staff retention! Webinar date is September 25th at 2:00 pm so call now to register. Simply call (888) 869-1189 and tell the operator that you want to register for Conference ID#59248147. They will give you additional information along with access to power point presentations that you can follow along with the speakers.

Resident's Right to VOTE! *(continued from page 1)*

Absentee One-Stop

In the County Board of Elections Office

Any registered North Carolina voter may choose to vote in person using One-Stop Absentee Voting which begins the third Thursday before the election and ends the Saturday prior to the election. North Carolina voters are able to vote by Absentee One-Stop at all county boards of elections offices during regular office hours.

For more information regarding One-Stop locations, consult the elections website on page 1 or contact your county board of elections.

Additional Absentee One-Stop Voting Sites

Some county boards of elections offer additional absentee one-stop voting sites within the county along with the county board of elections site.

Each county board of elections is responsible for the operation of its Absentee One-Stop Voting sites and are required to submit a Plan for Implementation to the State Board of Elections for approval.

For more information, contact your local board of elections or the North Carolina State Board of Elections at 506 North Harrington Street, Raleigh, NC 27603 or call (919) 733-7173.

**NATIONAL RESIDENTS' RIGHTS WEEK 2008:
OCTOBER 5-11, 2008**

**Recipe for Home: Defining and Creating Home
in Long-Term Care Facilities**

Residents' Rights Week is designated by NCCNHR: The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care and is celebrated the first full week in October each year to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities, including nursing homes, sub-acute units, assisted living, board and care, and retirement communities. It is a time for celebration and recognition offering an opportunity for every facility to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect and the value of each individual resident.

The Western Piedmont Area Agency on Aging Ombudsman Program has provided press releases for area newspapers to help educate the community of this special celebration. In addition, area facilities will receive informational brochures with ideas for celebrating Residents' Rights week along with copies of local Residents' Rights week Proclamations signed by area officials that can be displayed.

For more information, please contact your Regional Ombudsman at (828) 485-4213.

RESIDENT RIGHTS: LOSS AND THEFT

During the Holiday season I receive many calls about residents who are missing items they received as gifts. I hope you have never had the unpleasant experience of finding that your personal items have disappeared—either through loss or theft. Personal loss is NOT an inevitable fact of life in a nursing home or assisted living home, and you do not have to accept it!

For most residents, the only link to the past may be a few cherished possessions, so protecting these invaluable belongings from loss or theft is of paramount importance.

Here are some things you can do to protect your belongings:

- Ask to see your personal inventory sheet and verify all your possessions are listed.
- IMMEDIATELY mark new items with your name AND add it to your inventory sheet.
- Use a permanent marker to write your name on clothing and other personal items in an area that does not show when worn or used.
- Engrave or permanently mark dentures and eyeglasses with your name. (Most dentists are able to engrave dentures).
- Ask to be provided with something that can be locked, such as a drawer or box. Keep the key with you at ALL times and find out if anyone else has a copy of the key.
- Only keep small amounts of cash for your use. Homes are obligated to maintain a "Patient Trust Account" for you (at your request) and to provide reasonable access (during normal business hours) to your account.
- Identify the staff personnel responsible for investigating reports of loss and theft. Report any loss to that person IN WRITING as soon as you can AND SEND A COPY TO YOUR OMBUDSMAN (see last page of newsletter for address). Make sure that the home gives you the results of the investigation.
- Request reimbursement if the property cannot be recovered.

Federal and state laws require long-term care homes to protect the personal possessions of their residents and have written policies for handling loss and theft. Ask to see a copy of these policies. If a home fails to maintain a reasonable secure environment, the home may be held responsible for the loss or theft of your personal property.

DIGITAL TELEVISION UPDATE ~ LONG TERM CARE RESIDENTS CAN NOW REQUEST COUPONS!!!

NATOA, TeleCommUnity, MACC, Seattle and others filed comments in the NTIA nursing home/PO Box proceeding. At issue, NTIA proposed to expand the coupon eligibility rules to permit people in nursing homes to receive DTV converter box coupons, but only if they submitted their social security numbers. In addition, people who use PO Boxes as residential addresses would be eligible to receive coupons if they submitted their lease or driver's license information. Local governments argued in force that other coupon recipients were able to self-verify address info and that requiring social security numbers would create a substantial risk of identity theft. In addition, local governments alerted several assisted living organizations of the proposed rule and those organizations also filed comments. **On September 18, 2008 the Federal Register will publish a rule that permits nursing home residents and PO Box recipients to apply for coupons without having to provide social security numbers or verification documents. The rule will become effective in 30 days.**

It's a small victory for some of our most DTV-impacted communities, but it's nice to know that the comment process can actually be used to improve the rulemaking process.

EVENTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

7th Annual North Carolina Conference on Aging
October 28 - 30, 2008
Greenville Convention Center & Hilton Hotel
Greenville, NC
For more information: www.aging.unc.edu.nccoa

Centralina Area Agency on Aging
2008 Annual Aging Conference
November 6 - 7, 2008
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
Charlotte, NC
1-800-508-5777

The Catawba Valley Memory Walk will be held on Sunday, November 16, 2008 at Lenoir-Rhyne University. Sign in will be at 1:00 and the walk around the beautiful LR campus will take place approximately 2:00. This walk is Sunday afternoon, after worship. Facilities are encouraged to form teams! For Memory Walk questions: contact Becca Carpenter at Becca.Carpenter@alz.org or 1-704-532-7373.

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