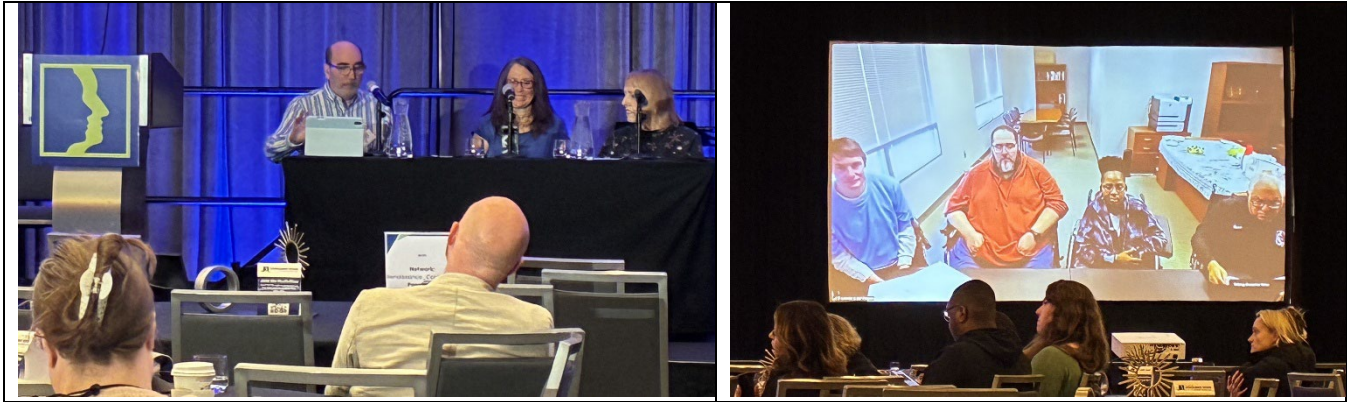


2025 National Consumer Voice Conference: Residents on Being Their Own Best Advocates



If you really want to fix what ails nursing homes, residents are the logical go-to experts. Life in a nursing home is not just something they've heard about — they live it every day. And in New Jersey, residents have gone beyond the walls of their own homes by forming a group, NJ Nursing Home Residents United, that works to build community with residents statewide and identify common issues.

New Jersey residents shared their strategies and methods during a workshop at the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care conference held in November 2025 in Arlington, Va. Residents United members Ray DiFrancesco and Gail Smith led the presentation in person, alongside Eliz Speidel, LTCO Director of Community Engagement, while Chris Thomas, James Cook, Tanette Clegg, and Louis Bonilla joined via Internet connection from the LTCO office in Trenton. The workshop delved into petition drives, media coverage, outreach to legislators and policymakers, and how residents worked with LTCO to use the social media channels to support an increase in the personal needs allowance.

The four-day conference marked the 50th anniversary of Consumer Voice, a leading national advocacy organization for long-term care residents.