



The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

January 2026

ANOTHER YEAR OF RESIDENTS BEING THEIR BEST ADVOCATES

A Message from Laurie Facciarossa Brewer, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

To kick off our first 2026 edition of The Beacon, I wanted to wish you a healthy and happy new year and look forward to a future where more and more residents are able to improve conditions and the quality of life in their nursing homes.

When we created the Community Engagement Program, it was dedicated to the proposition that residents can be their most effective advocates. No one knows your experience as well as you do. **And no one can tell that story as well as you.**



Eliz Speidel, our Director of Community Engagement, and her team have done remarkable work to give residents the tools and guidance they need to advocate for change. In 2025, resident leaders from across the state formed a group called ***NJ Nursing Home Residents United*** (RU) that works to identify common problems and potential solutions.

The RU group meets every two weeks by ZOOM. If you would like to connect with the group, call **1-609-690-4740** or email community@ltco.nj.gov.

In the past two years, a member of the group helped to write a bill that would increase the personal needs allowance (PNA) from \$50 to \$140 a month. She and others then stepped up to circulate petitions, call legislators' offices, testify at committee hearings, and meet with legislators, their staff, and representatives of the governor's office. After every meeting, support for the bill grew.

Meanwhile, New Jersey residents appeared on webinars sponsored by national advocacy groups and participated in campaigns to fight Medicaid cuts and require financial transparency for nursing homes. In November, a half-dozen New Jersey residents led an extremely well-received workshop at the National Consumer Voice's 2025 conference in Northern Virginia.



There is still work to do. The PNA bill has not passed yet, and everything goes back to square one if the bill is not signed into law by Jan. 12. But I fully expect that residents will embrace the challenge and begin again. We will persist!

Alleged Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in Two Nursing Homes

The Office of the State Comptroller released a report in December detailing the results of a five-and-a-half-year investigation into mismanagement, self-dealing, and profiteering by the owners of nursing homes in Hammonton and Deptford. Read the full report at <https://tinyurl.com/tsyxmsvb>. For the Ombudsman's reaction, visit <https://nj.gov/ooie/news/2025/12102025.shtml>.



Residents' Rights Corner: Care Planning for the New Year

Nursing home residents have the right to be **directly** involved in developing their own care plan, a document that describes a resident's specific health conditions, medications, dietary needs, and daily routines. The plan should also include personal preferences, activities, and quality-of-life goals.

If you are a long-term resident, your plan was likely created some time ago. But the plan is NOT set in stone. You have a right to review the plan and request changes. If you think your rights have been violated, please call **1-877-582-6995**.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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H R M T G Q F O H O
H A W O Q T U W V J
S D P A G M N L V J
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