

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S2-12-25  
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



Center for Medicaid and State Operations/Survey and Certification Group

MAY 31 2007

Ms. Beverley L. Laubert, President  
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs  
Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman  
50 W. Broad Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215-3363

Dear Ms. Laubert:

Thank you for your letter communicating the concern expressed by a number of the State long-term care ombudsman agencies regarding the lack of communication between the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and State Licensing and Certification survey agencies. You believe the stated lack of communication negatively impacts surveyors in that they may not be receiving important pre-survey facility or resident information and the ombudsman is not receiving post-survey information necessary to monitor identified areas of concern. You have requested the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Regional Offices annually review each State's written policy and make follow-up contact to the State Long-Term Ombudsman to review how Licensing and Certification agencies are implementing the State Operations Manual's requirement of ombudsman notifications.

CMS recognizes that ombudsman, advocates for long-term care residents are a vital part of the continuum of care process and supports your concern and your recommendation. To that end, we will issue a Survey and Certification letter that will be posted on our CMS Web site outlining the State survey agency (SA) responsibilities regarding communicating with the State Ombudsman. We also urge you to let your members know that if they are having specific problems with their SA that they should contact their SA or appropriate CMS RO. We are enclosing a copy of the names and telephone numbers of our RO contacts for your information.

Thank you for expressing your concerns. Your endeavors to safeguard the health and safety of our nation's frail and elderly populations are appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas E. Hamilton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas E. Hamilton  
Director

Enclosure