

# Overview of the Massachusetts Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program



- **A federally mandated program serving all States and US territories**
- **In existence since early 1970's**
- **Purpose is to provide advocacy for individuals living in nursing homes, rest homes, and assisted living residences**
- **Funded with federal and state resources**



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-ND](#)

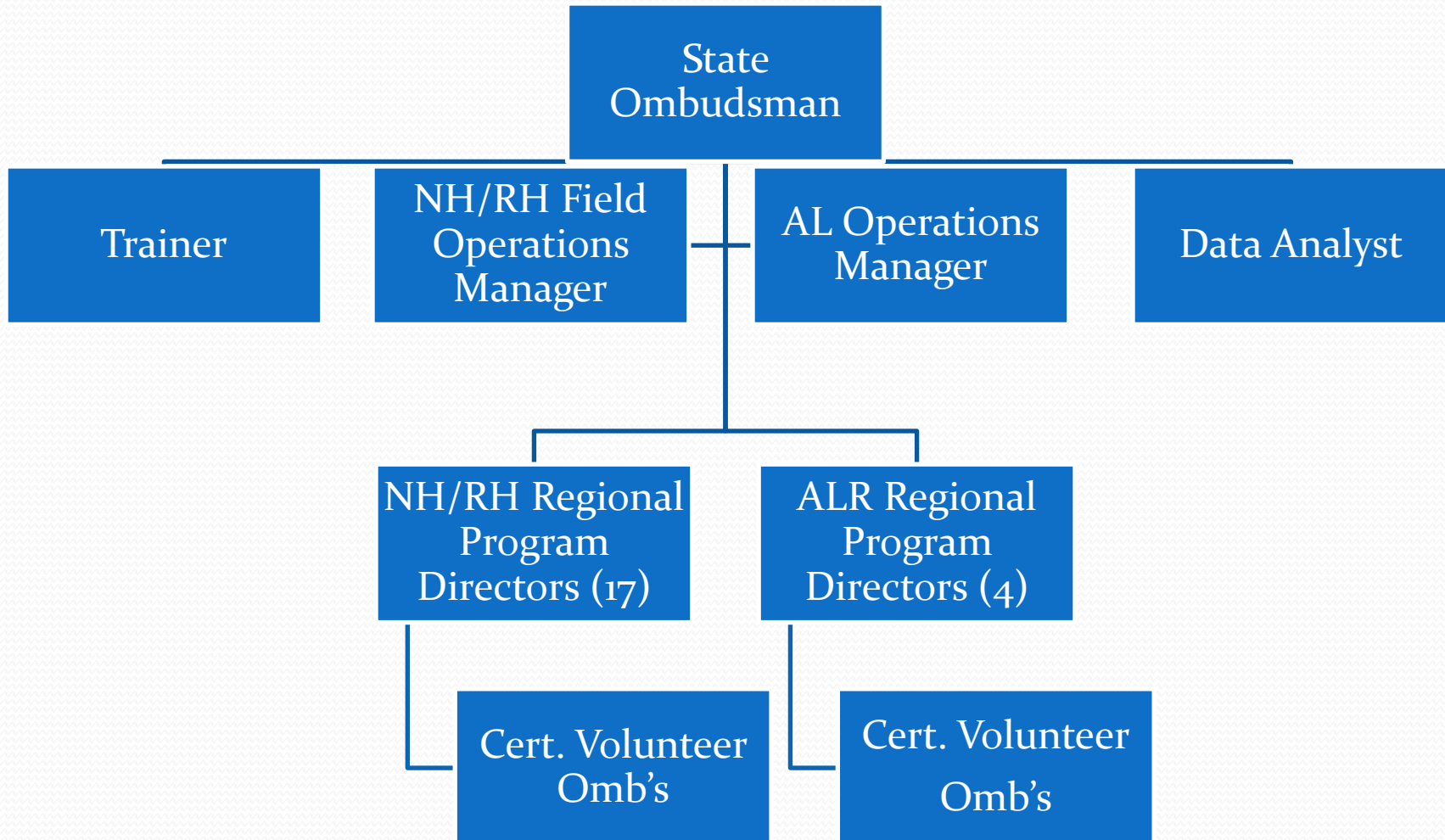


In Massachusetts, there are 41 paid Ombudsman staff and 199 Certified Volunteer Ombudsmen, who last year donated 15,797 hours to the program.

They provided advocacy to over 65,000 residents living in over 683 nursing homes, rest homes, and assisted living residences across the State.

Long-term care Ombudsmen work from one of 17 host sites across Massachusetts.

# Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Organization





We are required to engage in the following activities:

- Represent the interests of residents
- Receive, investigate and work to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents.
- Protect Resident Rights
- Provide information
- Advocate for positive change regarding the health, safety, welfare and rights of residents



Every Certified Long-Term Care Ombudsman receives over 30 hours of initial training, plus ongoing training and support each year. In return, they are expected to:

Routinely visit assigned nursing home, rest home, assisted living residence,

    speak with residents,

    make observations about resident rights,

    work to resolve issues of resident rights with staff of the home.

Attend monthly meetings of local program for training and support.

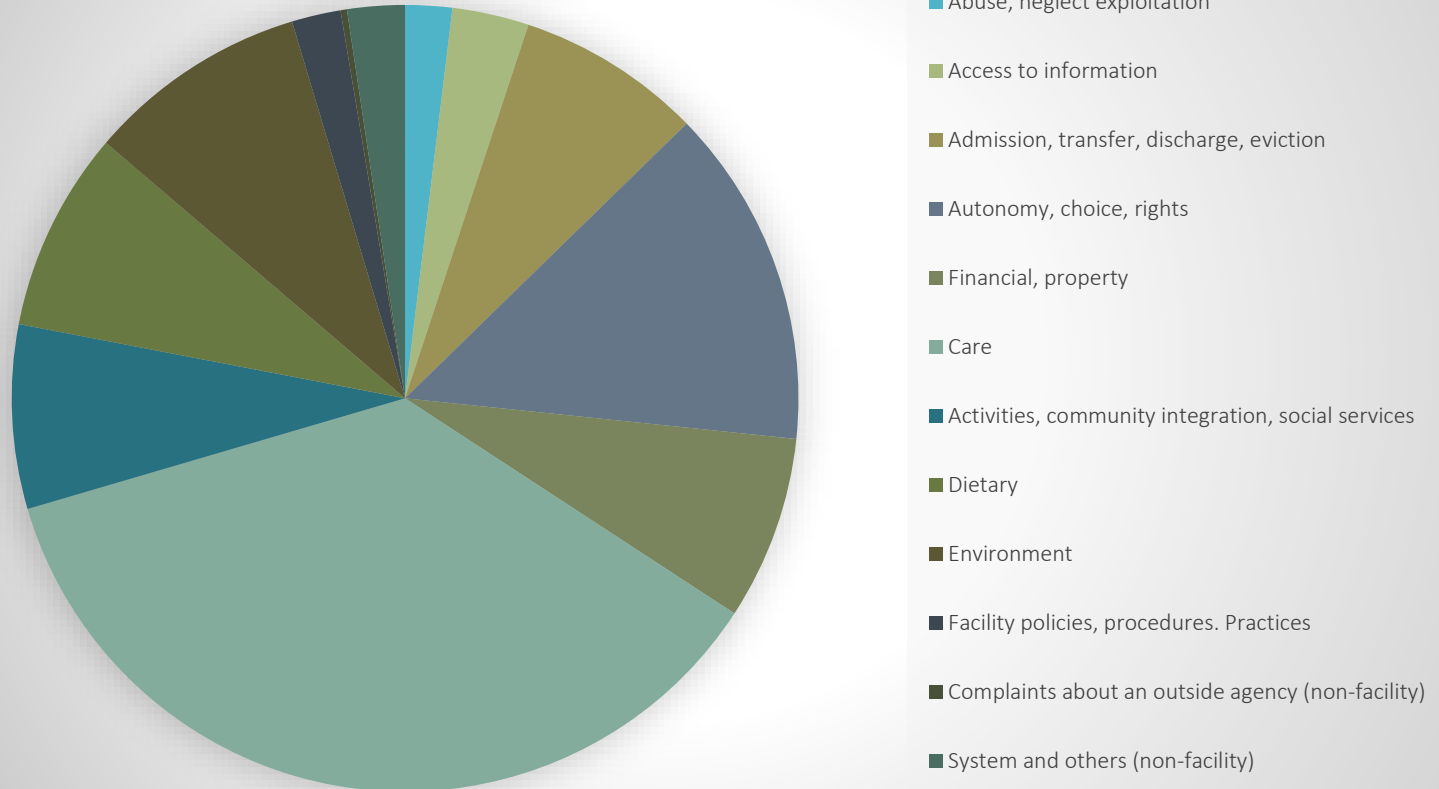
Follow regulations, policies and procedures of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.

# What kinds of problems does the Ombudsman work to resolve?



# In Federal Fiscal Year 2023, the Massachusetts State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program worked to resolve 3,426 complaints.

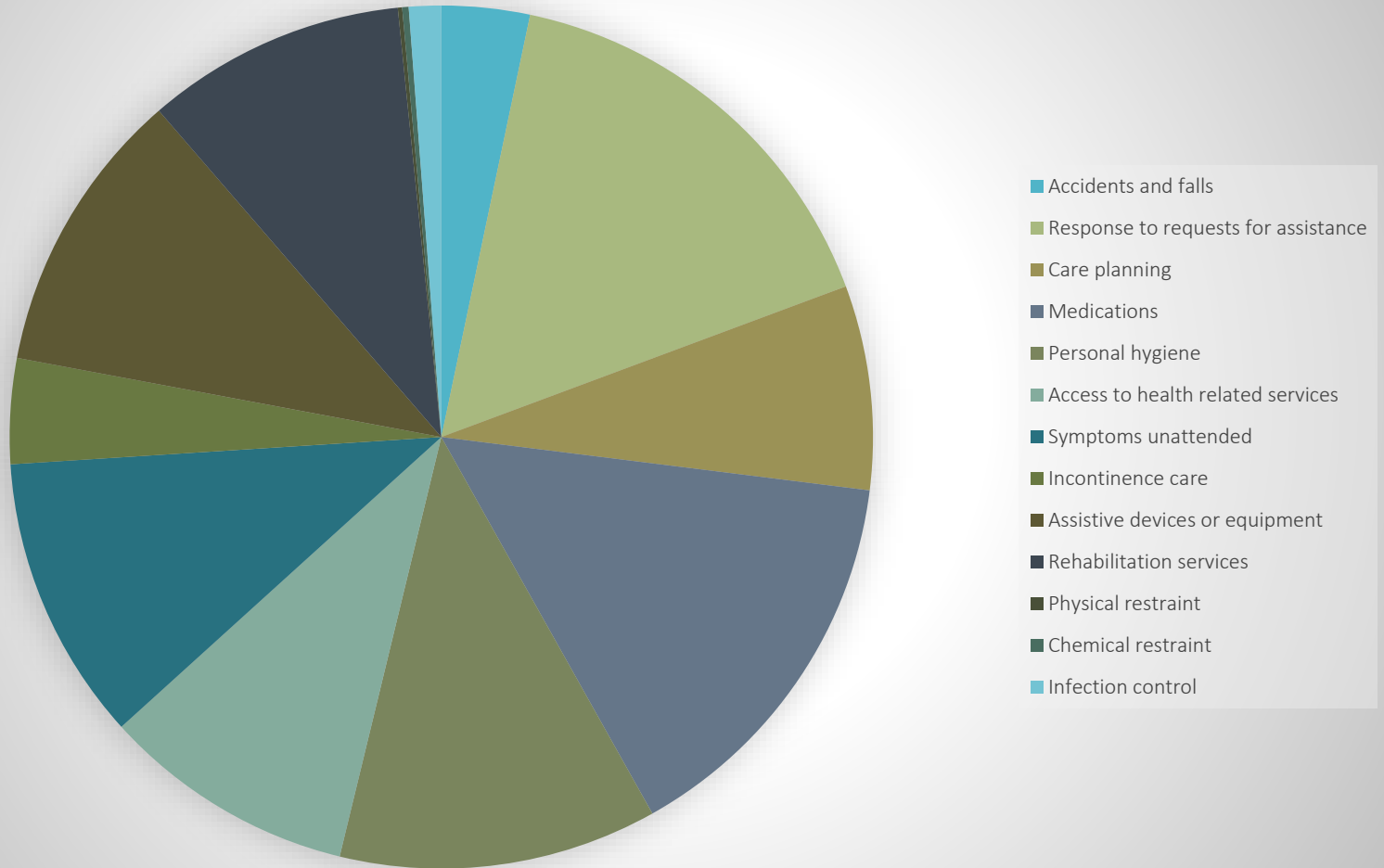
Complaint Types





# CARE COMPLAINTS

Care Complaint Types



Resident Rights are guaranteed by federal and state law.

Long term care homes are required to “promote and protect the rights of each resident.”

Federal Requirements stress individual dignity and self-determination.

A person who moves into a care home has the same rights as we do, but it can be more challenging to exercise those rights.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

## Residents have the right to:

- A Dignified Existence
- Self-Determination, including right to refuse/accept care
- Be Fully Informed
- Raise grievances
- Visit with whomever they choose
- Participate in social, religious, civil, community activities, both inside and outside the home
- Manage their own financial affairs
- Privacy
- Certain protections regarding discharge or eviction

# Other decision-makers & the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

## Health Care Proxy

An individual designates someone, called a health care agent to make medical treatment decisions when they lose the ability to make their own choices

## Durable Power of Attorney

Written authorization given when one has capacity, for someone to act on his or her behalf.

## Guardians

A probate court judge determines an individual no longer has the capacity to make their own decisions.

# Nursing Homes

Short-term rehab and long-term medical care

Run by Licensed Nursing Home Administrator

24-hour nursing care

Social workers, Dietician, Nurses, CNAs, Therapists, Activities staff

Payment is usually initially by insurance/Medicare (short-term only), followed by private pay or Medicaid

Generally institutional/medical model



# Rest Homes

- People in need of support, but do not have the higher level of medical/nursing care needs.
- Provide housing, meals, administer medications and personal care
- Private pay or SSI/SSDI



## ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENCE



Non-institutional, residential housing option with services available – NOT considered a health care facility in Massachusetts

Help available 24 hours a day but may not have nurse on-site

People can supplement the care provided by the residence

Certified by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Landlord/tenant law governs evictions

Primarily private pay

Importance of residence agreement – understand what you are paying for!!

## **VOLUNTEERS WANTED!!**

**Visit residents in nursing homes, rest homes and assisted living residences**

**You can make  
a Difference!**



**For more information about this important volunteer advocacy work, call us at:  
617-222-7495**

**Training and support provided for Certification.  
Placement available throughout Massachusetts  
Long Term Care Ombudsman Program  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
1 Ashburton Place, 10<sup>th</sup> floor**

**Boston, MA 02108**



## QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

Carolyn Fenn, State Ombudsman:

617-222-7491

Main Ombudsman Line:

617-222-7495

Website for more information and regional contact:

[Massachusetts Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-long-term-care-ombudsman-program)