



# Wyoming Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Presented by Patricia Hall the State  
Long-Term Care Ombudsman





# Your State Long Term-Care Ombudsman

My name is Patricia Hall, please call me Patty. I am the State Long Term-Care Ombudsman (SLTCO) for Wyoming. I am a State employee. The State contracts with Wyoming Senior Citizens, Inc. who hire and provide the employment side of the Regional Ombudsman. The State Ombudsman provides the programmatic side.





# Ombudsman is Wyoming

There are 3 Ombudsman in Wyoming

- Overseeing 76 facilities
  - 4655 beds
- about 1551 beds per Ombudsman
  - Serving 97,813 square miles
- There are over 102,657 citizen's over 60 in Wyoming



## Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman

The Regional Ombudsman are the ones that go into facilities quarterly, provide information and assistance to the public and facilities, and they investigate and resolve issues and complaints. Wyoming has three Regional Ombudsman through Wyoming Senior Citizens, Inc. with offices in Riverton, Casper and Cheyenne.





## Regional Ombudsman:

- Ember Lucas Lead Regional Ombudsman- Riverton

Phone: (307)856-6880 or (800)856-4398

Email: [ember.lucas@wyo.gov](mailto:ember.lucas@wyo.gov)

- Kari Meyers Regional Ombudsman-Casper office

Phone: (307)235-5959 or (877)634-1006

Email : [kari.meyers@wyo.gov](mailto:kari.meyers@wyo.gov)

- Vacant Regional Ombudsman- Cheyenne

Phone: (307) 634-1010 or (877)634-1005

Email:





# The Volunteer Ombudsman Program

- 2 Volunteer Ombudsman in Fremont County. Each assigned to one facility.
- 2 hours per week unscheduled visits.
- Must be 18 years of age, pass a background check and go through the 34 hours of training.
- Visit with Residents to develop rapport and provide Ombudsman presence in the facility.

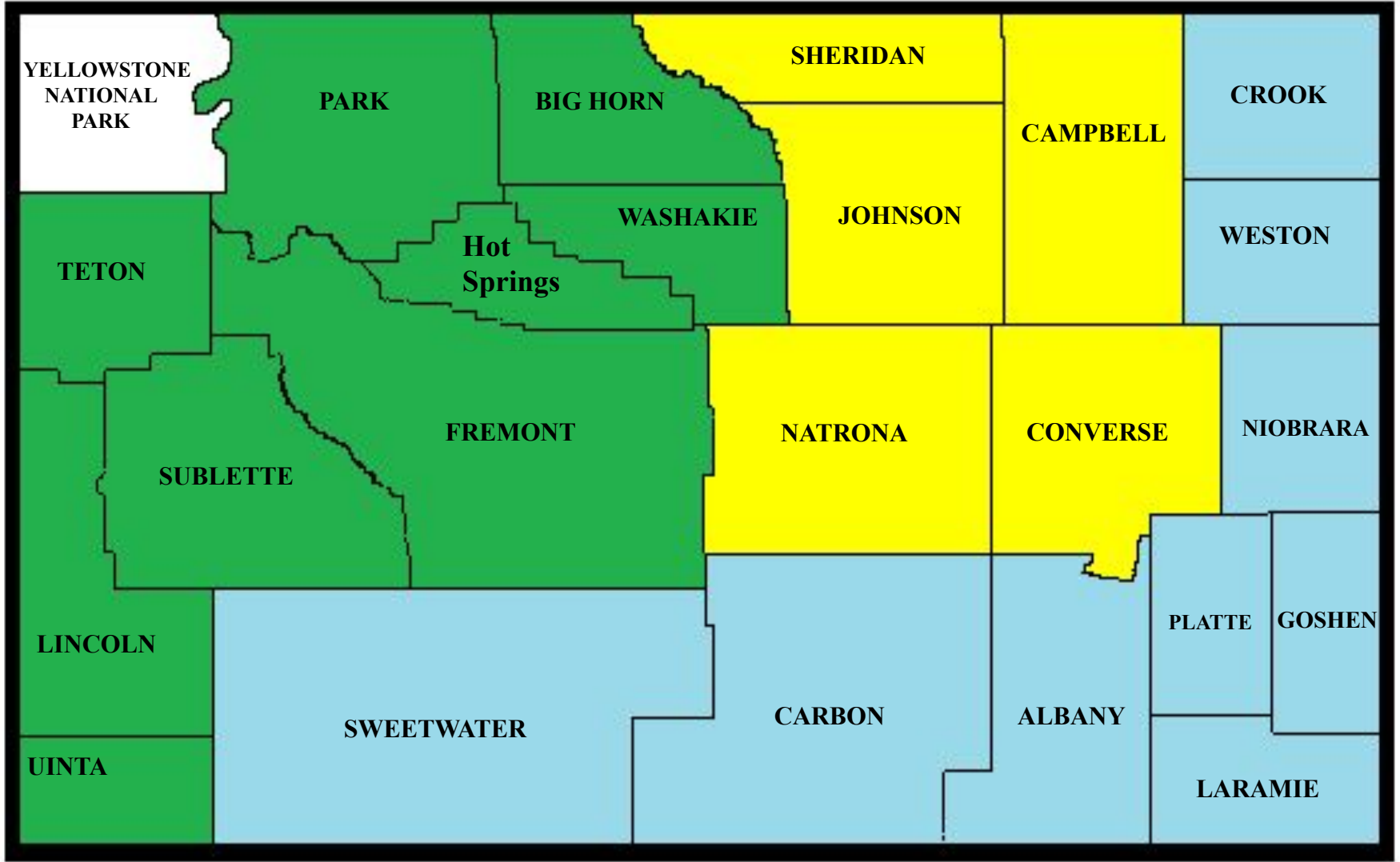
## Volunteers make a difference

- They are an extra set of eyes and ears in facilities.
- They get to know all the residents really well, and are invaluable to the Regionals as far as knowing what is going on in the facility.
- They're very helpful in making routine visits and providing a presence in the facilities.
- They free up the paid staff to handle complaints and other areas of their job.
- In the three facilities we have volunteers in, as of today we have no complaints and no cases.



# Wyoming Long Term Care Ombudsman

State Long Term Care Ombudsman: Patricia Hall 307-777-2885



**Ember Lucas**  
307-856-6880  
[Ember.lucas@wyo.gov](mailto:Ember.lucas@wyo.gov)

**Kari Meyers**  
307-235-5959  
[Kari.meyers@wyo.gov](mailto:Kari.meyers@wyo.gov)

**Nicholas Wiseman**  
634-1010  
[nicholas.wiseman@wyo.gov](mailto:nicholas.wiseman@wyo.gov)

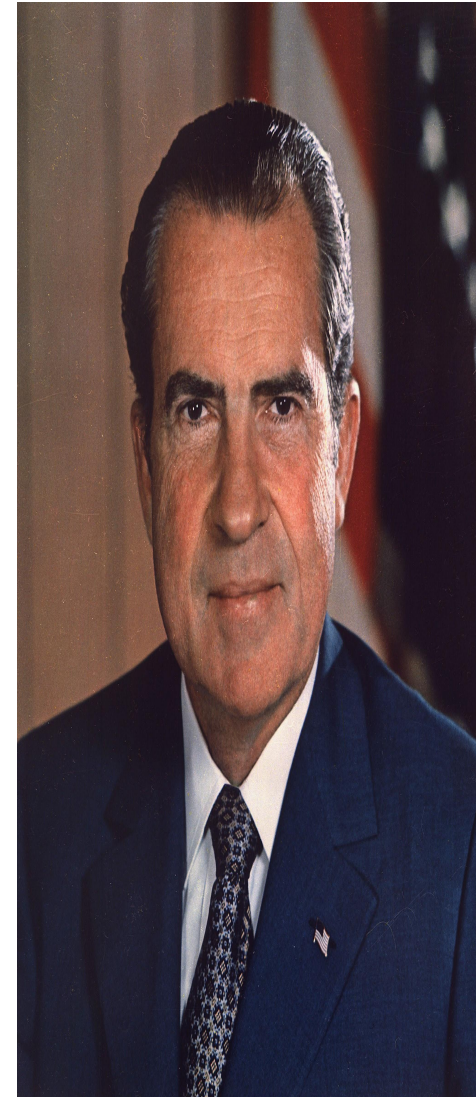


# How the program began...

- Start of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965 began the nursing home industry we see today.
- During that time there were many articles published about ‘abuse, neglect, and substandard conditions in nursing homes’.
  - Marietta, Ohio – Carpeting spread flames in a NH fire leading to the deaths of 32 of the 46 residents there.
  - Baltimore, Maryland – 25 residents died due to salmonella poisoning after delays in seeking medical help.
- This pushed for additional regulations to be established for standards of care in long-term care.

# President Nixon's 8-Point Nursing Home Program, 1971

- Training of 2,000 state nursing home inspectors;
- Complete federal support of state inspections under Medicaid;
- Consolidation of enforcement efforts;
- Strengthening of federal enforcement of standards;
- Short-term training for 41,000 professional and paraprofessional nursing home personnel;
- Assistance for state investigative "Ombudsman" units;
- Comprehensive review of long-term care; and
- Crackdown on substandard nursing homes: cut off federal funds to them.



# Dr. Arthur Fleming

- Under the Office of Nursing Home Affairs, Dr. Arthur Fleming developed the idea of the ombudsman program.





## Ombudsman History

In 1972 the Ombudsman program began as a demonstration program. In 1978 Amendments to the Older Americans Act, required every state to have an Ombudsman program specifically defining the ombudsman functions and responsibilities. It is a Federal law that all States provide an Ombudsman to residents receiving Long Term Care Services. Funding for the program comes from Federal funds under the Older Americans Act, as well as some State of Wyoming allotted funds.



## What is an Ombudsman?

Ombudsman is a Swedish word meaning “citizen’s representative” a public official appointed to investigate citizens complaints against “agencies” that may be infringing on the rights of any vulnerable adult. As a Long Term Care Ombudsman the “agencies” are, Boarding homes, Nursing homes and Assisted Living facilities. It may also include any programs receiving State and Federal funds such as Hospice, Meals on Wheels or congregate housing.







## **What is an Ombudsman, Cont'd...?**

The primary duty of an Ombudsman is to protect the rights of individuals by investigating and resolving problems and grievances, providing information, and to work with facilities and organizations to increase their responsiveness to the people they serve. The Ombudsman services are free of charge, and they only work with the resident/ guardian or POA's consent and everything is confidential.



## Who Does the Ombudsman Serve?

- Residents or potential residents of Long Term Care Facilities and those in congregate housing.
- Recipients of LTC services in the community such as Meal on Wheels, Home Health, or Hospice.
- Relatives or friends of LTC residents.
- LTC facility employees and administrators.
- Members of community groups or citizens interested in improving long-term care.







## Ombudsman Responsibilities

As outlined in the Title VII of the Older Americans Act, an Ombudsman:

- Receives, investigates, and attempts to resolve problems or complaints affecting residents of long-term care facilities.
- Promotes resident, family and community, involvement in long-term care.
- Provides information about long-term care services.
- Promotes community education and awareness of the needs of long-term care recipients.





## Ombudsman Responsibilities Cont'd...

- Coordinates efforts with other agencies and organizations concerned with long-term care.
- If invited attend Resident or Family council meetings.
- Visit all Nursing Homes, Assisted Living and Boarding Home facilities at least quarterly and as requested by a resident.
- Identify issues and problem areas in long-term care and recommend needed changes.



## Elder Abuse Prevention

Part of our grant is under Elder Abuse Prevention, so we watch for signs and symptoms of abuse, encourage residents to speak up and report it. We attend Adult Protective Service meetings assisting in ideas for available resources. An Ombudsman does not investigate the alleged abuse but could be available to the resident should they need support. The Ombudsman is also available for public, staff and resident meetings to discuss the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to prevent it.





## What does a call to the Ombudsman look like?

The Regional Ombudsman receives a call from the Resident, Family member or Friend.

The Regional Ombudsman gets as much information as possible, clarifies what they want the Ombudsman to do and gets consent to talk to the people necessary to resolve the issue.

The Regional Ombudsman calls the necessary people to get more information.

We then touch back with the initial caller and try to resolve to their satisfaction.

Sometimes repeating the prior three steps several times





## Contact Information

Patricia Hall  
2300 Capitol Ave  
Cheyenne, Wyoming  
82001  
307-777-2885  
[patricia.hall1@wyo.gov](mailto:patricia.hall1@wyo.gov)





## Sources:

Wyoming Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Guide to learn more visit <https://health.wyo.gov/admin/long-term-care-ombudsman-program/> or call 1-800-856-4398

The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center  
<https://ltcombudsman.org/home>





# Questions?

