

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

September 24, 2024

PROCLAIMING OCTOBER AS RESIDENTS' RIGHTS MONTH

Residents' Rights Month is celebrated each October to acknowledge the residents living in long-term care settings and pay tribute to the Ombudsmen, citizen advocates, facility staff, and family members who support their rights every day. It is a time to reflect on the Nursing Home Reform Law, passed in 1987, that promises the right to individualized care, respect, and dignity, the right to visitation, the right to privacy, the right to complain, and the right to make independent choices. By proclaiming October as Residents' Rights Month, Los Angeles County (County) affirms its commitment to protecting and increasing awareness of long-term residents' rights.

This year's Residents' Rights Month, as designated by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, focuses on "The Power of My Voice." By emphasizing self-empowerment and centering the voices of residents, this year's theme reiterates each resident's right to advocate for a vibrant, fulfilling life.

Long-term care facilities are an integral part of our healthcare system, and they have a direct impact on our well-being and that of our loved ones as three out of four Americans over the age of 65 will require long-term care at some point in their lives. According to the California Association of Health Facilities, over 400,000 Californians are cared for in the state's 1,230 licensed long-term care facilities, approximately 400 of which are located in the County.

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Yet, despite the impact long-term facilities have on a vast proportion of the population, residents often remain unaware of their rights and unfamiliar with the resources available to them. This information gap can leave residents vulnerable when facing obstacles to receiving high-quality, life-affirming care. We must actively bridge this gap through ongoing educational efforts and by supporting the long-term care Ombudsmen, staff, and volunteers who advocate for residents' rights every day. Further, by educating County residents about their rights before they ultimately require long-term care, we empower future generations of long-term care residents with the knowledge needed to advocate for themselves and their quality of life. We must continually work to ensure that long-term care residents, both at present and in the future, are not left behind as we continue to pursue a more equitable and accessible healthcare system.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim October 2024 as Residents' Rights Month,
2. Direct the Departments of Public Health and Aging and Disability, in collaboration with Countywide Communications, to distribute educational materials related to Residents' Rights Month on social media, newsletters, and other communication platforms,
3. Direct the Department of Human Resources to share information regarding long-term residents' rights with County employees; and,
4. Direct the Auditor-Controller to publicize Residents' Rights Month on the October 15, 2024, paycheck.

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