



Infection Control Advocate & Resident Education (ICARE): Ombudsman Guide



How can I use ICARE to advocate for resident rights?

The ombudsman plays a very important role in helping residents and those closest to them including nursing community staff and administration to engage in actively advocating for their rights.

While the basic infection prevention and control content is available in both web-based and ombudsman-led teaching formats, two sections are only provided in the pre-created slides for ombudsmen (excluded from the web-based training):

- Discussion section: this section allows you as the ombudsman to reinforce the basic content with an emphasis on resident rights and quality care.
- Advocacy - Next Steps section: this section is truly the heart of the educational session-here you will help residents, and their families or representatives actively engage in learning about how they can actively engage in quality care with the nursing home. This must be done in small steps as this represents a major culture change for many nursing homes. Typically, quality initiatives in a nursing homes limit resident and advocate engagement. But engagement is recommended by CMS and can greatly enhance the quality-of-care delivery in a nursing home.

How can I get a nursing home to implement ICARE?

ICARE emphasizes active engagement and empowerment of everyone in the nursing home community representing a major culture change that takes time. For that reason, ICARE was designed to be implemented in three steps with each step leading to progress in the right direction. Here are a few tips that will help to promote and implement ICARE in nursing homes:

- Approach nursing home leadership & staff about ICARE and provide more information about the program.
- Inform nursing home leadership and staff that you will be promoting ICARE to residents so they are prepared to answer any questions or concerns they may receive.
- Ask about the QAA/QAPI committee structure at the nursing home and if it is possible to have a committee member give an overview of quality initiatives being developed or an activity summary to begin engagement.

Want to know more? Contact your nursing home advocate or send an email to ICARE@unthsc.edu.

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