

LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY COALITION

Advancing Quality, Dignity & Justice

Fact Sheet: The Fundamentals of Resident Rights – Dignity & Respect

There are many standards which nursing homes are required to follow in order to ensure that residents receive appropriate care, have a good quality of life and are treated with dignity. **YOU** can use these standards as a basis for advocating in your nursing home and community.

Following are two important federal standards. They apply to every nursing home resident in licensed facilities in the U.S. On the following page are some examples that illustrate how these standards are to be realized by nursing homes. [Note: The brackets below provide, for reference, the citation to the federal requirement (42 CFR 483.xx) and the F-tag number used when a facility is cited for failing to meet the requirement.]

STANDARD 1: RESIDENT RIGHTS [42 CFR 483.10(a) F-550]

- *The resident has a right to a dignified existence, self-determination, and communication with and access to persons and services inside and outside the facility....*
- *A facility must treat each resident with respect and dignity and care for each resident in a manner and in an environment that promotes maintenance or enhancement of his or her quality of life, recognizing each resident's individuality.*
- *The facility must protect and promote the rights of the resident.*
- *The facility must provide equal access to quality care regardless of diagnosis, severity of condition, or payment source. A facility must establish and maintain identical policies and practices regarding transfer, discharge, and the provision of services under the State plan for all residents regardless of payment source.*

STANDARD 2: EXERCISE OF RIGHTS [42 CFR 483.10(a) F-550]

- *The resident has the right to exercise his or her rights as a resident of the facility and as a citizen or resident of the United States.*
- *The facility must ensure that the resident can exercise his or her rights without interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal from the facility.*
- *The resident has the right to be free of interference, coercion, discrimination, and reprisal from the facility in exercising his or her rights and to be supported by the facility in the exercise of his or her rights as required under this subpart.*

INTENT OF THIS REGULATION

- *Each resident has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. All staff activities and interactions with residents must focus on assisting the resident in maintaining and enhancing his or her self-esteem and self-worth and incorporating the resident's preferences and choices. Staff must respect each resident's individuality when providing care and services while honoring and valuing their input.*
- *All residents have rights guaranteed to them under Federal and State law and regulations. This regulation is intended to lay the foundation for the rights requirements. A resident must be allowed to exercise their rights based on his or her degree of capability.*

Examples From the Federal Guidelines to Support Your Advocacy

- **Grooming** residents as they wish to be groomed (e.g., hair combed and styled, beards shaved/trimmed, nails clean and clipped).
- **Dressing:** Encouraging and assisting residents to dress in their own clothes appropriate to the time of day and individual preferences rather than hospital-type gowns; Labeling each resident's clothing in a way that respects his or her dignity (e.g., placing labels on the inside of shoes and clothing).
- **Promoting Independence & Dignity in Dining:** Facility and staff should avoid:
 - Day-to-day use of plastic cutlery and paper/plastic dishware;
 - Bibs instead of napkins (except by resident choice);
 - Staff standing over residents while assisting them to eat; and
 - Staff interacting/conversing only with each other rather than with residents while assisting residents.
- **Respecting Residents' Private Space & Property** (e.g., not changing radio or television station without resident's permission, knocking on doors and requesting permission to enter, closing doors as requested by the resident, not moving or inspecting resident's personal possessions without permission).
- **Speaking Respectfully to (and About) Residents** by addressing the resident with a name of the resident's choice (not "Honey" or "Sweetie" unless that is what the resident wishes), avoiding use of labels for residents such as "feeders," not excluding residents from conversations or discussing residents in community settings in which others can overhear private information.
Focusing on residents as individuals when they talk to them and addressing residents as individuals when providing care and services.
- **Maintaining Resident Privacy Of Body:** including keeping residents sufficiently covered, such as with a robe, while being taken to areas outside their room, such as the bathing area (one method of ensuring resident privacy and dignity is to transport residents while they are dressed and assist them to dress and undress in the bathing room).
- **Refraining from practices demeaning to residents** such as keeping urinary catheter bags uncovered, refusing to comply with a resident's request for toileting assistance during meal times, and restricting residents from use of common areas open to the general public such as lobbies and restrooms, unless they are on transmission-based isolation precautions or are restricted according to their care planned needs.