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**EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS**



PRESS RELEASE

Long-term Care Residents Honored During Residents' Rights Week

October 4 - 10, 2009

Kilgore, TX, September 29, 2009: Across the country, residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities along with family members, ombudsmen, citizen advocates, facility staff, and others will honor the individual rights of long-term care residents by celebrating Residents' Rights Week October 4-10, 2009. Designated by NCCNHR: The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, the week highlights the importance of listening to residents who live in our country's nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

"This year's theme, Hear Our Voice, emphasizes the fundamental rights of all long-term residents to be treated with the appropriate care they deserve and need to maintain quality of life," said Sarah F. Wells, Executive Director of NCCNHR. "Residents will be treated with dignity and respect of their full individuality; staff and residents will enjoy relationships that enhance their day to day lives; and the long-term care facility will operate more effectively with its day to day activities being based on and developed with consumer involvement when facilities care about their residents."

In 1987, the Nursing Home Reform Law that was passed guarantees nursing home residents their individual rights, including but not limited to: individualized care, respect, dignity, the right to visitation, the right to privacy, the right to complain, and the right to make independent choices. Residents who have made their home in other types of facilities such as assisted living or adult care homes maintain their rights as US Citizens. Residents' Rights Week raises awareness about these rights and pays tribute to the unique contributions of long-term residents.

The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has worked tirelessly for over 30 years to promote residents' rights daily. More than 8,000 volunteers and 1,000 paid staff are advocates for residents in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Authorized under the Older Americans' Act and administered by the Administration on Aging, the program also provides information on how to find a facility, conducts community education sessions, and supports residents, their families and the public with one-on-one consultation regarding long-term care.

The East Texas Council of Governments advocates for residents' rights locally through the administration of an Ombudsman program with the Area Agency on Aging of East Texas. An Ombudsman is a certified patient advocate who works with nursing home residents. Ombudsmen volunteers visit 80 long-term care facilities in East Texas and speak with residents to remind them of their rights and to help them resolve concerns that sometimes are voiced by the residents or their families.

If you would like to be a part of National Residents' Rights Week, contact the local Ombudsman Program administered at ETCOG at 1-800-442-8845 ext 215. For more information about Residents' Rights or the NCCNHR, visit <http://www.nccnhr.org/resident/nursinghome/residents-rights>.

About ETCOG

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within the fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. Established in 1970, ETCOG, either directly, or through its contractors, provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG and its contractors also build the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provide peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and deliver rural transportation services, business finance programs, and environmental grant funding for the region.

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