



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rachel May

## Senator May's Bill to Increase Information Access for Nursing Home Residents Signed into Law

RACHEL MAY December 21, 2021

| ISSUE: **NYS OMBUDSMAN, RESIDENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS**

| COMMITTEE: **AGING**

**Signed into Law!**

**S.4377**

**Increasing Information Access in Nursing Homes**

**Why It Matters:**

- New York's Long-term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) was established more than 40 years ago, yet many are still not aware of the program.
- This bill will help inform families and nursing home residents of the existence of the LTCOP by requiring that residents have better access to ombudsman contact information.
- This bill also requires the Residents' Bill of Rights be available to residents in the six most common non-English languages in the state.
- Information access is critical for residents and their families.

*Senator Rachel May*

**Albany, NY** - Senator Rachel May (D-Onondaga, Madison, Oneida) is proud to announce that her bill to improve access to critical information in nursing homes has been signed into law by Governor Hochul. The bill ([S.4377](#)) mandates translation and provision of the Nursing Home Residents' Bill of Rights into the six most common non-English languages and mandates prominent display of contact information for the long-term care ombuds program in nursing homes.

"Older New Yorkers and their families need to have access to information on many topics in order to make the best decisions for themselves and their loved ones," said **Senator Rachel May, Chair of the Senate Aging Committee**. "This bill will make critical information on the Long-term Care Ombudsman

Program, as well as the Residents' Bill of Rights, more widely and easily accessible. I am proud to have sponsored this bill and am very happy to have the Governor sign it into law. New York State must continue to do all it can to better support our growing aging population.”

New York State's Long-term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) was established more than four decades ago as part of the federal Older Americans Act. Its purpose, in the state program's own words, is to advocate "for residents by investigating and resolving complaints made by or on behalf of residents; promoting the development of resident and family councils; and informing government agencies, providers, and the general public about issues and concerns impacting residents of long-term care facilities." The effectiveness of the program, however, relies on an assumption that residents and families know of the program and its services and on the existence of effective two-way channels of communication between LTCOP staff and volunteers and the Department of Health, to which complaints are funneled for investigation and resolution. Significant evidence and testimonials from family members and ombuds volunteers indicate that neither of these assumptions are being met.

This bill calls for specific measures to better inform families and nursing home residents of the existence of the LTCOP by requiring that residents have better access to ombudsman contact information. Currently, such information is most commonly posted in a single common area, such as an elevator lobby, and possibly included in a packet of information for families at the time of admission. Nevertheless, time and again, family members reported being unaware they had access to an ombudsman to address issues or concerns relating to a loved one's care. The bill also would assure that the Residents' Bill of Rights is available to residents in the six most common non-English languages in the state.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S4377

- 
- Introduced
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Requires translations of a patient's rights into the six most common non-English languages of New York State; and relates to the posting of information relating to the long-term care ombudsman program

February 03, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by Rachel May

Do you support this bill?