

# Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County  
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November 19, 2021

**Members Present** – Dr. Benjamin Abe, Interim Chair, Sheila Mary, Paul Mitchell, Claudette Thomas, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams

**Members Absent** – Charlotte Antoine, Dr. Brenda Jackson,

**ADS Staff** –Karen Winston, Mary Mitchell, ADS Interim Director

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## I. Approval of October Meeting Summary

Motion to approve August meeting minutes.

- Dr. Abe: move to modify or accept minutes
- Moved by Claudette
- Seconded by Paul
- Passed unanimously among members

## II. African American Caregivers Forum: Legacy of Love

Dr. Abe acknowledged the November 13 virtual caregivers forum. Those who attended thought it was a good program! About 80 people joined online. The keynote speaker was LueRachelle Brim-Atkins, founder & principal consultant of Brim-Donahoe & Associates. Karen will share the YouTube video link when it is available.

## III. MCAAE & ADS Advisory Council Letter of Support for YBG Healthcare

Members were reminded of the August 20 presentation provided by Nathan Yemane, owner of YBG Healthcare. Nathan presented information about the need for an African American owned hospice program in King County and asked the MCAAE for a letter of support. Members voted to approve.

Since the August meeting, Nathan also presented his information to the ADS Advisory Council's Advocacy Committee. Following their review, the AC approved a motion to co-sign on the letter of support. The letter will be updated and forwarded to the Nathan.

## IV. King County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Pamela Williams is the Regional Long-Term Ombudsman for King County. She has dedicated over 35 years working with vulnerable adults in long-term care facilities and through home and community-based services. As Pamela navigated her career through long-term care she began to see, the importance of care and compassion, and also how regulations over-shadowed the attentiveness to older residents.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) is a federally mandated program under the Older Americans Act. Each state is required to have this program. The LTCOP

Co-sponsored by:



City of Seattle



King County

investigates complaints about the long-term care system. Although it is a State program, the LTCOP is managed by King County and located in the Federal Way Multi-Service Center. There are 13 service area regions in Washington, and King County has the largest number of long-term care facilities in the state. Each office works to promote and protect the rights of residents living in long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes, adult family homes, and assisted living facilities.

Ombuds are often called the “watch dogs” or the “canary in the coal mine” because they are often the only eyes and ears for the residents – especially for those who have no family or friends. Ombuds listen to families, lawyers, social workers, or anyone who has their concerns about long-term care facilities, but residents are their top priority. Ombuds are resident-directed, resident-focused, and resident-driven. The LTCOP operates independently from the facilities and licensing.

The Resolution Standard – Following every investigation or resolution process, the key question an Ombuds has for any complaint is, has the complaint/issue been resolved to their satisfaction? If yes, the investigation is closed. If no, the process will continue until the resident says the issue has been resolved.

Pamela also discussed the LTCOP duties, including:

- Certified Ombuds may be a volunteer or a paid person,
  - All are designated to act by the State LTCOP,
- Protect resident rights and promote residents rights,
- Receive and resolve complaints at a low level,
- Resident-driven LTC Ombuds, inform residents and others about Residents Rights,
- Monitor oversight agency’s response (and others),
- Collect information, facilitate communication, provide comment, and improve systems.

Currently, in King County there are:

Type of LTC Facilities in King County	Number of Facilities	Number of Residents
Adult Family Homes	1,254	7,199
Nursing Home Facilities	50	5,219
Assisted Living Facilities	155	10,000+
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>22,418+</b>

The program needs more volunteers! The current number of Ombuds in King County to address complaints that may come from residents in LTC facilities is:

- Certified Volunteer Ombuds in King County – 20
- LTCOP Full-Time Employees – 6

The LTCOP recruits/trains volunteers in King County to become certified. The program requires volunteers to complete:

- 32 hours of virtual training
- A criminal background check
- No conflict of interest
- Commit to one year of volunteer service

Pandemic Impact – The LTCOP advocates for residents rights and their civil rights. Ombuds meet with management and staff to address a resident’s concerns, and help the client understand their rights. During the pandemic, resident rights have been waived. The impact of this has left clients feeling very isolated, confused, and emotional. It also effected the physical health of many residents. There were many deaths, weight loss, and increased confusion, and mental illness. This required the LTCOP to develop creative ways to conduct their work, such as mailing postcards to residents, telephoning residents, window visits, and appropriate protective clothing/equipment if an Ombuds needed to enter a facility.

Common complaints from residents during the pandemic:

- Poor quality of meals (diet restrictions ignored).
- Lack of personal hygiene.
- Lack of visitation – Many residents did not understand the reason for no visits.
- Discharge dumping – Facilities would discharge residents to a hospital and upon discharge from the hospital, the facility would not allow them to return.
- Facility closures – At least seven facilities have closed since the pandemic, and families were not allowed to tour other facilities before placing their loved ones there.

Retaliation is real and residents fear retaliation from staff at facilities. If a resident is labeled “difficult,” some retaliations reported during the pandemic have been:

- Not giving residents a shower or a bath,
- Threatening residents with removal from a facility,
- Serving food that is cold,
- Handling them roughly during patient care,
- Leaving residents in soiled clothing, and
- Withholding medications.

During the pandemic, the LTCOP support included:

- August 3, 2020, LTC Ombuds began re-entering facilities to visit residents and perform Ombuds duties.
- Required Training-Infection Control and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Long-Term Care Settings was implemented before Ombuds could re-entered facilities.
- LTCOP partnered with the Adult Family Home Councils of Washington and Seattle-King County Public Health to set-up testing set during the summer in south King County.

- King County LTCOP partnered with the same team to get AFHs access to the vaccines for residents and staff.
- Washington State initiated a Statewide Resident Advisory Council.
- Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman legislated for HB1218. This new law addresses communications, isolation, and much needed safety measures to ensure that residents in long term care facilities and their families are able to enjoy the quality of life guaranteed to them in state and federal law. It also includes an Essential Support Person which allows a resident to identify a loved one that can visit them at any time, no matter what the situation is.

**Question** – What about home care. If someone refuses to move to a facility what happens?

**Response** – Everyone has the right to remain in their own home and there are many programs that help. If assistance is needed in the home, the program to call is **Community Living Connections** at 1-844-348-5464. This is the front door to the network of aging programs and services in King County.

**Question** – What kind of penalties have facilities faced for the mistreatment of residents?

**Response** – It depends on the type of offence, but penalties can range from \$500 to \$3,000. DSHS determines the amount of fines following their own investigation.

**Question** – If a facility has to take a patient back, is there increased scrutiny upon that facility?

**Response** – Yes, the Ombuds will keep an extra eye on the resident, as well as the facility.

**Question** – Does the LTCOP work closely with Adult Protective Services (APS)?

**Response** – Yes, very closely.

**Question** – What is the role of LTCOP when a facility closes?

**Response** – When a facility closes, we make sure that the residents are relocated to a safe space, close to loved ones (if possible), that they have all of their belongings, and that the resident is happy. Ombuds are also required to visit residents in new facilities within 3 to 5 days.

**Question** – When volunteers commit to serve as an Ombuds for one year, how many hours are they required to work per month?

**Response** – About 20 hours a month or 4 hour per week.

**Question** – Despite the large number of adult family homes in King County, do you think there is still a need for more?

**Response** – The number of adult family homes is growing while the number of nursing homes is decreasing. What is needed is more scrutiny to make sure they are operating as quality long-term care options for people who need them.

**V. ADS & Legislative Updates** – Mary provided the following updates.

HSD Updates

- The opening for the HSD Deputy Director position has been extended. The position will oversee ADS and all HSD homelessness contracts. HSD would like to hire someone who has a proven record of leading with equity. If you know someone, please share the information with them: <https://bit.ly/3GwL6Ko>

ADS Updates

- A workgroup has come together to begin the process to hire the ADS Director position. Please encourage interested individuals to apply.
- We are currently meeting with state and federal legislators about 1) the personal needs allowance, and 2) additional state funding for the case management program. The ask is for a total \$24mill = \$12mill each from state/federal govts. AAAs are also asking for parity with the state funding process. So far, the response from legislators has been positive. The next meeting with a legislator is scheduled for November 21.
- Case managers are gearing up to begin home visits again in November and December. Most clients have not been seen since the pandemic began. Clients need to be seen in person! A pre-screening checklist tool will be applied to determine the vaccination status of the household before entering homes.

State

- A comment was made about the WA Cares Fund - <https://wacaresfund.wa.gov/wa-cares-benefits> Mary discussed how it will work. Under this law, individuals who opt-in will have access to a lifetime benefit amount that, should they need it, they can use on a wide range of long-term services and supports.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for **Friday, December 19, 2021**.