



~ Volunteer Spotlight ~

The staff at Action for Older Persons, Inc. would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Judy Allen for her service as a volunteer for our NYS Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP). Judy has spent the past four years protecting the quality of life of residents of Long-Term Care facilities. Residents in these facilities deserve to continue to live their lives as independently as possible and often are able to accomplish this by utilizing their advocate, a certified ombudsman. Judy shared that she decided to become a certified ombudsman after a rehabilitation stay. She said that she was lucky enough to have family to help her and knowing the importance of having an advocate. Thinking about what it must be like when a resident does not have someone to help, she chose to become an ombudsman. Judy now visits the residents for a minimum of two hours each week to ensure that their care remains resident-directed and resident-centered. In her four years of volunteering at AOP, she has spent a total of 210.2 hours advocating for residents.



While Judy has been a huge asset for Becca Bradley & Morgan White, proud to have Judy as a reliable volunteer. Judy allows new or potential volunteers to better understand what it's

help to the residents, she has the LTCOP Coordinators, Rebecca Bradley & Morgan White. Both coordinators have been a resource for potential volunteers to shadow her like to be a LTCOP volunteer.

When she was asked what some of the highlights of volunteering are, Judy stated, "You get such a good feeling helping and talking to each resident. That uplifting feeling of doing something when I visit with the residents is what I enjoy the most." Not only does Judy recommend becoming a LTCOP volunteer because of the positive impact it has on the life of a volunteer, she says the most important and rewarding part is helping the residents with their questions and concerns.

To become a LTCOP volunteer, contact Program Coordinator, Morgan White at 607-722-1251 or MWhite@actionforolderpersons.org.



HIICAP INFORMATION

HIICAP by the Numbers in 2017

We are very proud to have served many residents of Broome County through our HIICAP program in 2017. We also want to acknowledge our spectacular, dedicated volunteers and thank them for all they have done for us again this year.

- During the eight week (October 15-December 7) Open Enrollment period, AOP provided one-on-one counseling to more than 1085 Medicare beneficiaries. This assistance resulted in a minimum saving in anticipated health and prescription drug costs of \$1,062,792 for 2018. That is an average of \$979 per person.
- We were also excited to discover the impact of the HIICAP program throughout 2017; the figures are staggering. We will provide Medicare counseling services to more than 2,400 people for the first time ever. Providing this assistance will result in a minimum savings of \$2 million in health and prescription drug costs for 2018, an average of more than \$900 per person.

Part B General Enrollment Period

If you missed your initial enrollment period for Medicare Part B and are now looking to enroll, this is the time to do so. The Medicare part B General Enrollment Period runs from January 1st to March 31st; to enroll contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or visit the local office on Hawley Street in Binghamton. If you enroll in Medicare Part B during this time, your Medicare Part B will become effective July 1st.

If you have not been enrolled in creditable medical insurance coverage through your or your spouse's active employment in the previous 12 months, your Part B premium may be higher than the 2017 premium of \$134. This increase in monthly cost will be the result of the late enrollment penalty for Part B. The penalty is 10% of the current premium for each 12 month period that you were not enrolled in Medicare Part B or other creditable health coverage based on active employment. Unfortunately, this penalty will only continue to rise if you put off enrolling in Medicare Part B without other coverage.

Here are a few things to remember about Medicare Part B:

- You can only deny Medicare Part B, without risk of penalty, to continue with employer coverage based on you or your spouse's active employment if the company has more than 20 employees. If are not yet 65 and are eligible for Medicare based on disability, the company must employ more than 100 individuals.
- To enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan or Medicare Supplement Policy, you must be enrolled in Medicare Part B.
- With rare exceptions, enrollment in Medicare Part B is required when receiving retiree medical benefits.
- COBRA coverage is not based on active employment, even if your previous employer agrees to pay the premium. Therefore, COBRA coverage does not allow you to avoid the Part B late enrollment penalty. Additionally, Medicare coverage is often less expensive than COBRA.
- If you are eligible for a Medicare Savings Program, you may be able to enroll in premium free Medicare Part B at any time. The income limits for these programs are currently \$1357(single) or \$1823(couple) and AOP can assist with the application process.
- If you are losing coverage based on active employment, you are able to enroll in Medicare Part B outside of the general enrollment time frame.



HIICAP INFORMATION

Annual Medicare Advantage Plan Disenrollment Period

The Annual Medicare Advantage Plan Disenrollment Period takes place from January 1st to February 14th. During the disenrollment period, you are able to disenroll from a Medicare Advantage Plan and return to Original Medicare with or without a prescription drug plan. This period does not allow you to switch from one Advantage plan to another or from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan. Call AOP to schedule an appointment for assistance with disenrollment, as well as the selection of Medicare a Prescription Drug plan and/or Medicare Supplement policy.

Making Changes After Medicare Open Enrollment

While the Medicare Open Enrollment has come to an end, you may still have an opportunity to switch plans. If any of the descriptions below pertain to you and are unhappy with your current coverage, call AOP for an appointment;

- Those enrolled in EPIC can change their plan one time a year outside of Open Enrollment.
- Those enrolled in Medicaid, Low Income Subsidy, or a Medicare Savings Program can change their Medicare coverage at any time.
- In New York State, you are able to enroll in a Medicare Supplement policy at any time if you are currently enrolled in Original Medicare.

2018 Medicare Premium Amounts

The standard Medicare Part B monthly premium will continue to be \$134.00 in 2017. Although the premium will be \$134/month, some people with Medicare will continue to pay less.

Social Security has a “hold harmless” provision whereby a beneficiary’s Social Security check is not allowed to be reduced from one year to the next because of the increase in the Part B premium. So, for people with Medicare Part B currently collecting Social Security, the premium cannot be increased any more than their Social Security COLA amount or else the Social Security benefit would be reduced. Therefore, if you are currently paying \$110 and receive only an \$8 monthly COLA increase, your part B premium will be \$118/month in 2018. If you are currently paying \$111 and receive a \$30 COLA increase, your Part B premium will be \$134.

Beneficiaries that will be automatically subject to the \$134 premium will be those new to Part B in 2018 and those who may have Part B currently but are not collecting Social Security.

Co-pays and Deductibles with Original Medicare (does not apply to those with Medicare Supplement Policies or Medicare Advantage Plans)

The Part A cost-sharing amounts increase every year and 2018 will be no exception. The Part A deductible will be increasing from \$1,316 to \$1,340, coinsurance days (61-90) from \$329 to \$335, lifetime reserve days from \$658 to \$670 and skilled nursing facility coinsurance from \$164.50 to \$167.50 per day. The Part B cost-sharing amounts will remain the same for 2018. The Part B deductible will be \$183 a year and most expenses will have a 20% co-pay. Preventive services, such as cancer screenings, will continue to be covered at 100%.



HIICAP INFORMATION

For those who do not qualify for premium-free Part A based on their own or a spouse (or ex-spouse's) work history, they will be able to purchase Part A but at a slightly higher premium in 2018. Most people will qualify for premium free Part A Coverage. People with Medicare with less than 30 quarters of Medicare-covered employment can get Part A for \$422 per month in 2018, up from \$413 in 2017, while those with between 30 and 39 quarters would pay \$232 in 2018, a small increase from the 2017 rate of \$227.

Social Security Number Removal Initiative (SSNRI)

Starting in 2018, CMS will be removing the current Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) from the Medicare cards and replacing it with a new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI), which does not contain a Social Security number. The new MBI will contain the same number of characters as the current HICN (11). The MBI will contain uppercase alphabetic and numeric characters throughout the 11 digit identifier. The MBI will be unique to each beneficiary, so that a husband and wife will each have their own MBI.

All people with Medicare will be sent a new card with an MBI between April 2018 and April 2019 to replace their current Medicare card.

Federal Nursing Home Regulations

“On September 28, 2016, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released updated federal nursing home regulations (Requirements of Participation for Long-Term Care Facilities). This is the first comprehensive revision to the regulations since they were issued in 1991. The updated rule (also referred to as the “final rule”) is being implemented in three phases: Phase 1 - November 28, 2016, Phase 2 - November 28, 2017, and Phase 3 - November 28, 2019.” –The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (NCV).

Phase 2 of these regulations has already begun. There are several resources that can help you keep up on all of the new changes and keep yourself informed of your rights as a nursing home resident or as a relative/friend of a loved one who lives in a nursing home.

For key points on the changes in the Federal Nursing Home rules visit The NCV's link:
<http://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/general/summary-of-key-changes-effective-phase-2.pdf>

For a deeply detailed description that gives guidance to State Department of Health Surveyors for Long Term Care Facilities on the new regulations visit:
http://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/issues/SC17-36.03.Appendix_PP_with_Final_IGs.pdf

For additional resources, presentations, handouts etc. visit:
http://theconsumervoice.org/issues/issue_details/proposed-revisions-to-the-federal-nursing-home-regulations

If you'd like to speak to one of our Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Coordinators, please contact Becky Bradley or Morgan White at (607) 722-1251.



NEWS & INFORMATION



STAR Program



Have you heard of the STAR Program? The STAR Program is for people who are 65 years of age and older, disabled, or Veterans. If you qualify for STAR (based on income) you can receive a deduction on your property and/or school taxes. There are various levels of STAR including Basic, Enhanced, and Veterans. For eligibility and application assistance, contact your Town Assessors Office. The timeline to enroll in STAR is January 1 to March 1 each year. If you are already enrolled in STAR, keep an eye out for your renewal.



What is your New Year's resolution? Would you like to give back to your community?

AOP has various volunteer opportunities available to those who want to give back! We currently have four different opportunities available.

The Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program:

The HIICAP program volunteers provide unbiased information to Broome County residents on Medicare and additional insurance plans. Medicare and other insurance is a complicated and often frustrating concept. The HIICAP volunteers provide assistance, knowledge, understanding, and ultimately, peace of mind to Broome County's Medicare Beneficiaries. All of this is in addition to the financial savings found by HIICAP volunteers, which positively impacts AOP's clients and the community as a whole. The HIICAP program is a challenging and rewarding opportunity for eager volunteers. To quote one of our current volunteers, "who needs luminosity; you could just be a HIICAP volunteer. That will keep you on your toes."

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program: The LTCOP program is searching for volunteers that are interested in becoming advocates for seniors in nursing homes or assisted living/adult care homes. AOP conducts the Ombudsman program in Broome, Delaware, Tioga, and Chenango counties and is searching for volunteers in all four areas. The LTCOP volunteers visit nursing homes or assisted living/adult care residents and discuss resident's concerns. The volunteers are then able to assist the residents with any actions that need to be taken in order to provide a better living environment.

Office/Administrative Volunteer: Action for Older Persons would happily benefit from volunteer assistance with various office duties including data entry, filing, and reminder calls. Special projects are always arising as well.

Graphic Design: With the expansion of current services and development of new programs, Action for Older Persons is always seeking to better inform the public and to encourage the utilization of available services. The development of promotional materials would help AOP reach these goals and, more importantly, our clients.





Action for Older Persons STAFF

Action for Older Persons' staff could not be happier to provide new programs, to serve an increasing number of individuals and to expand our long time programs to new, additional counties. With this growth, we have also seen our staff expand. With that in mind, we thought we would introduce (or reintroduce) you to our friendly, knowledgeable staff.

Casondra Hamilton

Executive Director

Casondra originally joined the AOP staff as the HIICAP Program Coordinator in April 2013 and became AOP's Executive Director one year later. She received her Master of Public Administration degree from Binghamton University and Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations at SUNY Oswego with the goal of leading an organization, such as AOP, working to improve the lives of community members. Casondra is also an avid distance runner, preferring races between the 15k (9.33 miles) and marathon (26.2 miles) distances.

Mary Ann DeMoney

ICAN Program Coordinator

Mary Ann joined AOP in June 2013 as a Program Specialist. She came to AOP with 10+ years' experience in Customer Services and Mental Health services. She has her A.S. in Human Services. In June 2015, Mary Ann became the Program Coordinator for AOP's newest program the Independent Consumer Advocacy Network (ICAN) assisting those with both Medicare and Medicaid receiving assistance in their homes. She currently oversees the program in three counties, including Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego and Cortland. She prides herself on organization, dedication and advocating on behalf of her ICAN clients. Along with being the "office Mom", she also has two kids that keep her very busy with school and sports.

Rebecca Bradley

LTCOP Program Coordinator

Rebecca (Becky) Bradley has been with Action for Older Persons since October 2011 as the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Coordinator and led the program through its expansion with the program now serving Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Tioga Counties. Becky has spent her entire career focusing on the needs of our aging population and while working to diligently serve residents of long-term care facilities, Becky still finds time to stay involved in local community events and organizations. In her spare time, she can be found drinking coffee (all of it), schooling everyone on Game of Thrones lore, chasing her nephew around or cheering on her beloved Woman's National Soccer Team.

Morgan White

LTCOP Program Coordinator

Morgan began working at AOP as a Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Coordinator in November 2015. She began her professional career at a Long-Term Care Facility in 2007 as a dietary aide and, shortly after, she became a dietary supervisor. After attending SUNY Cortland and earning her Bachelors in English Literature, she started working as an activities leader at another Long-Term Care Facility. When Morgan isn't advocating and empowering residents of Long-Term Care Facilities she enjoys reading and is a big fan of British history and pop culture. She knows she would be sorted into Ravenclaw when she receives her Hogwarts acceptance letter. You can often find her spending time with her husband, parents, siblings (She's #6 of 8 kids!), nieces and nephews, and involving herself in a variety of crafty things.



Action for Older Persons STAFF

Jane Talbot

HIICAP Program Coordinator

Jane started working at AOP as the HIICAP Coordinator in December 2015. She began her career as a programmer for IBM, working there for 12 years. Then after staying home with her children for a few years, she worked for 10 years as the Director of Faith Formation at Church of the Holy Family in Endwell. She is excited to be leading the HIICAP program which provides such valuable assistance to local residents.

Chereese Douglas

Health Program Generalist

Chereese joined AOP in June 2015 as a Program Specialist and took on additional responsibilities as the Health Program Generalist in 2016. She assists with various aspects of the HIICAP and ICAN programs. Chereese also leads AOP's Advanced Planning for End of Life programs. Raised in New York City, she moved to Binghamton to continue her education and graduated from Binghamton University in 2014 with a Master's in Social Work. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking, dancing, and yoga.

Isabelle Duvivier

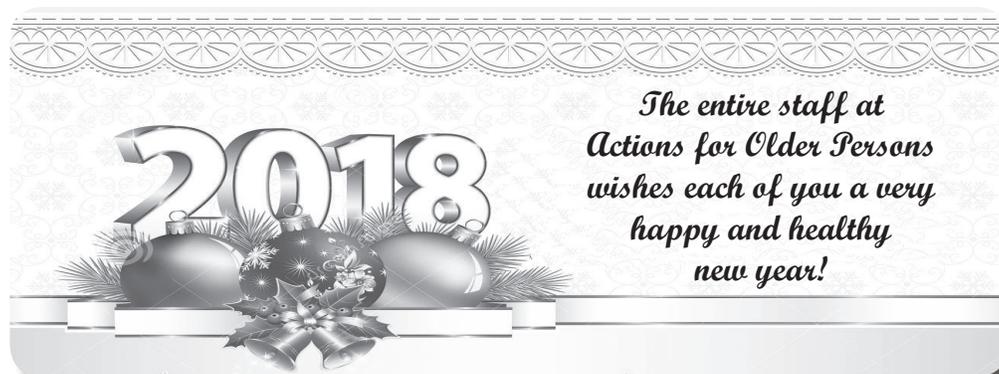
Program Specialist

Isabelle completed her degree in Human Development in December 2017. During the fall of 2016, Isabelle interned as a HIICAP counselor. She proved herself to be a valuable team member as an intern and she gladly accepted the position of Program Specialist after finishing her internship. She will continue as a member of the AOP team during the first half of 2018, while she decides where to pursue her graduate degree.

Sabrina Scelsi

Program Specialist

Sabrina joined AOP in September. She has an A.A.S degree in Paralegal and worked for several local law firms before taking time off to raise their three daughters. During their school years she was grateful to be employed as a clerical substitute for the Vestal Central School District so she could still tend to their needs. One of the things that brings Sabrina the most joy is helping others. She also enjoys teaming up with her husband to conquer projects in their home, reading, babysitting their two precious grandsons and having a full house with laughter, fellowship and good food. She feels blessed to be part of the team here at AOP.





ICAN
Independent
Consumer Advocacy
Network

Action
for Older
Persons

What is ICAN?

ICAN is the New York State Ombudsman Program for people with Medicaid who need long-term care services.

What can ICAN do for me?

- We can answer your questions related to Medicare, Medicaid, long-term care (for example, your home care or nursing home care), and your managed care plan.
- We can help you solve problems with your managed care plan or providers like home care agencies, nursing homes, doctors, hospitals, and pharmacies. For example, we can help you complain or appeal.

Who does ICAN help?

- We help anyone in a Medicaid managed care plan who needs long-term care services (like home attendant, adult day care, or nursing home).
- We also help people who are applying for Medicaid and need help enrolling in a Managed Long-Term Care (MLTC) or Medicaid Managed Care (MMC).
- We can talk to friends, family members, and anyone else who is helping people with their medical decisions.

Can I trust ICAN?

Yes. We are not related to any health insurance companies. We are not trying to sell you anything. We do not care whether you enroll in any particular managed care plan or not. We only want to help you make the decisions that are right for you. Our services are completely free and confidential.

How can I get help from ICAN?

Call Action for Older Persons at (607) 722-1251.

We are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

Visit our website at actionforolderpersons.org.

Do you need help paying for your Medicare Part B or Medicare deductibles, co-payments, and co-insurance? Assistance May be Available!

Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs), also known as Medicare Buy-In programs, are programs that help pay your Medicare premiums and sometimes also coinsurance and deductibles. There are three main Medicare Savings Programs: Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB), Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) and Qualifying Individual (QI) program. Each program has different eligibility limits. Those who qualify for Medicare Savings Programs are also automatically enrolled in Extra Help, also known as Low-Income Subsidy, which can drastically reduce medication co-pays and reduce or eliminate the premium for a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. For those who qualify, Medicaid can also be used as secondary insurance coverage in addition to Medicare.

1. QMB — Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program

- Pays your Medicare premiums. Also, if you enrolled in the QMB program, providers can't charge you Medicare deductibles or cost-sharing for Medicare-covered services if you see providers who participate in Medicare or are in your Medicare private health plan's network.
- You can have both QMB and Medicaid.

2. SLMB — Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary Program

- Pays your Medicare Part B premium.
- You can have both SLMB and Medicaid.

3. QI — Qualifying Individual Program

- Pays your Medicare Part B premium.
- You can't have both QI and Medicaid.

4. Medicaid

- Medicaid is health insurance for people with low incomes. Even if you have Medicare, you can also get Medicaid to lower your health care costs. Medicaid pays your Medicare deductibles and co-insurances if you see doctors who participate in Medicare and Medicaid or who are in your Medicare private health plan's network. These doctors can't charge you anything for Medicare-covered services.
- If you have Medicaid, you probably also qualify for the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program

(QMB). The government will pay your premiums if you are enrolled in the QMB program.

- Medicaid covers additional benefits, such as dental, vision, and long-term care.

In New York State, the money you spend each month on health insurance premiums other than the Part B premium will not be counted. Specifically, the Part B premium (the \$134 standard premium or on average \$109 you pay monthly or is deducted from your Social Security check) will count toward your total income. This is because once you have the MSP, the Part B premium will be paid by the state, not you. However, if you also pay for a Medigap, Medicare Advantage, or some other secondary insurance premium, you can deduct that amount from your monthly income to qualify for the MSP in NY. Sometimes a portion of your part D premium can also be deducted from your income.

Current Gross Monthly Income Limits		
Program	Individual	Couples
QMB	\$1,025	\$1,847
SLMB	\$1,226	\$1,644
QI	\$1,377	\$1,847
Medicaid	\$845	\$1,229

If you think you might be eligible for any of these programs, call Action for Older Persons at 607-722-1251 for an appointment to review your eligibility and to receive assistance with the application process.





Senior Health Insurance Counseling

Seminars - January • February • March

The following are the Medicare, Medicaid and ICAN (Managed Long-Term Care) seminars for fall/winter 2017.

Space is limited so please call AOP at (607) 722-1251 to register for seminars.

Medicare 101

Join us for a comprehensive seminar on Medicare. You will learn about eligibility, Part A and Part B coverage, EPIC, and preventive benefits that can enhance and preserve your health. Space is limited.

Tuesday, January 16, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Medicare Advantage Plans

Join us for a seminar on Medicare Advantage Plans (MAP) options. You will learn about the differences between original Medicare and MAPs, as well as the different types of MAPs (HMO, PPO, and PFFS plans.)

Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Closing the Gaps in Medicare

Join us for a seminar on the supplement insurance options available to cover some or all of the remaining costs after Medicare pays for a medical or hospital service. You will learn what the gaps are and which plans fill those gaps.

Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 15, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 15, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Long-Term Care Insurance

Join us for a comprehensive seminar on the various ways to plan for and pay for long-term care. You will learn eligibility guideline; affordability and risk factors; as well as the various options to offset the costs, including long-term care insurance, NY State Partnership Plans, the role of Medicare and Medicaid, and home equity.

Tuesday, January 23, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Medicaid and Nursing Home Care

Join AOP for an overview on using Medicaid to pay for a Nursing Home stay for you, a spouse, parent or other loved one. Topics will include an introduction to financial guidelines, the five year lookback, spousal impoverishment laws, etc. We can also answer questions about Long-Term Care insurance policies (partnership and non-partnership policies) and the use of Medicaid.

Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 21, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 21, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.

Managed Long-Term Care (ICAN)

Are daily tasks such as bathing, toileting, food preparation and dressing getting difficult for you or a loved one? Are you eligible for Medicare and Medicaid? If you've answered yes to these questions, this presentation is an excellent source of information for you. Join AOP and receive information about Managed Long-Term Care Plans, the services they provide, how to enroll, and the eligibility criteria. We understand that these plans are new and confusing for many, so bring your questions or simply come to learn more.

Thursday, January 11, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, February 8, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, March 8, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Advance Planning for End of Life

Join us for a comprehensive seminar on advanced directives. You will learn how to select and assign a health care proxy, complete a living will, and broach the subject of end of life decisions with your family. All participants will receive the necessary documents for free.

Tuesday, January 9, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.



Senior Health Insurance Counseling

Educating, Empowering, Advocating *by the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman*

The NYS Long-Term Care Ombudsman:

What are those things that make us who we are as individuals? It is our ability to make choices, to exercise our rights, and remain as independent as possible while maintaining our dignity. Many of us envision living our lives in this manner, surrounded by family and friends in our own homes and community. The reality, however, can be very different. Unforeseen circumstances such as a fall or illness can change a person's life plan, creating the need to be placed in a nursing home or adult home. Residents in these facilities deserve to continue to live their lives as independently as possible and often are able to accomplish this by utilizing their advocate, a certified ombudsman.

The New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is available in all long-term care facilities across the state to assist individuals in keeping their sense of identity, self-worth, and ability to make choices regarding the care they are receiving. Simply put, the ombudsman program is resident-directed and resident-centered. Ombudsmen provide assistance to individuals and their families to understand and exercise their right to good care in a safe environment that promotes and protects their dignity and quality of life in the facility they now call "home."

At the heart of the NYS Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is its corps of specially trained and certified volunteers. Many volunteers are retired professionals from various backgrounds. These dedicated ombudsmen spend several hours per week in each of their assigned facilities, advocating for the residents by providing information and resolving complaints.

Little things make a big difference in everyone's lives. The certified ombudsman volunteers are a "regular presence" in facilities. Because of this "regular presence," these volunteers get to know residents, their needs, and those things that make a difference in their everyday lives. For residents without any family or loved ones, the ombudsman may be their only socialization from outside the facility and also may be the only advocate they have. The ombudsman becomes a "voice for the voiceless" and a lifeline for those who need assistance when they feel like they have nobody to turn to.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is dedicated to educating, empowering and advocating for the residents in long-term care settings. Sometimes the role of the certified ombudsman is simply to empower residents and their families with education and knowledge so that they can advocate on their own behalf. An ombudsman can also advocate for residents by investigating and resolving complaints made by or on behalf of them, always with the residents' consent. Ombudsmen are committed to maintaining resident confidentiality, which is a cornerstone of the program. They represent residents and work on their behalf with facility administrators, staff, and family members to achieve a satisfactory resolution of their complaint and improve their quality of life.

At still another level, certified ombudsman engage in systems advocacy by promoting the development of resident and family councils within facilities and by informing government agencies, providers, and the general public about issues and concerns impacting residents of long-term care facilities.

Throughout the state there are approximately 800 volunteers who provide residents with support and advocacy. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is always in need of more dedicated volunteers to provide this needed and beneficial service to the residents of long-term care facilities.



If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for Broome, Chenango, Delaware, or Tioga County or are in need of the assistance of a certified ombudsman, please call (607) 722-1251 or check out our website at www.actionforolderpersons.org





From the Desk of AOP's Executive Director...

As the Executive Director, I would like to extend my thanks to the 101 individuals and families who became first time Action for Older Persons' members or renewed their memberships during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period. While we work to provide meaningful membership benefits, we are also thankful that your support allows us to continue to grow and expand.

Casondra Hamilton
Executive Director

In the 34 working days during this year's Open Enrollment, AOP staff and volunteers were able to provide one-on-one counseling services to more than 1085 individuals. This is a 9.7% increase over 2016 and a record for Action for Older Persons. The increase in clients served allowed AOP to increase dollars saved during open enrollment by 31.8%, totaling more than \$1 million. Without our members' support, we would be unable to adequately staff the organization and to achieve this milestone.

We want to extend our sincerest thanks to all of our new and renewed members. We would not be able to do it without you! If you renewed your membership in early 2017, during our traditional renewal period, please watch for this year's notice – coming in March 2018.

~ Casondra Hamilton

