



## Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman

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Claudette Royal  
State Ombudsman  
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Dear Administrators, Residents and Resident Representatives,

As you know by now, long-term care facilities nationwide must restrict visitors and non-essential health care personnel per federal and state guidance. In response to this directive, all New York State (NYS) Certified Long Term Care Ombudsmen will refrain from entering long-term care facilities and will provide “virtual” visiting by phone, email and other web-based technologies. This is a temporary, but necessary, change to protect the health and safety of residents. As the State Ombudsman, I am in regular contact with Federal and State authorities and we are consistently monitoring the status of the COVID-19 outbreak. We will return to normal visitation once it has been deemed safe to do so.

During this time, facilities, residents, and resident representatives who would otherwise visit in-person, need to use alternative means of communication such as phone, Facetime, Skype, email, etc. One of the chief concerns resident representatives have is their anxiety of not knowing how their loved one is being cared for during this time. To proactively address this, facilities should provide alternative means of communication to ensure residents and their representatives are staying informed and maintaining regular contact.

Please be assured that the NYS Ombudsman Program will continue to respond to, and investigate complaints brought forth by residents, family members, or other individuals acting on the resident’s behalf. Ombudsmen will be facilitating communication by phone or video conferencing and concerns will be addressed. The rights, safety, and well-being of residents is our priority. We will continue to represent resident’s best interests and work to ensure quality care remains a primary focus during this difficult time.

If you have concerns related to a long-term care facility, contact your local Long Term Care Ombudsman office at **607-274-5498** or via email at **[pchevallard@tompkins-co.org](mailto:pchevallard@tompkins-co.org)**.

Sincerely,

Claudette Royal  
New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman

The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is a programmatically independent advocacy service located within the New York State Office for the Aging. Points of view, opinions or positions of the Ombudsman Program do not necessarily represent the views, positions or policy of the New York State Office for the Aging.