

NALLTCO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, October 24, 2007  
Arlington, Virginia

CALL TO ORDER: Jackie Case, NALLTCO Chair called the meeting to order at 12:15pm.

Invited Guests: Frank Burns, Administration on Aging; Barbara Dieker, Administration on Aging; Sue Wheaton, Administration on Aging; Brandt Chvirko, Administration on Aging; Alice Hedt, NCCNHR; Lori Smetanka, NORC; Jeanne Yordi, NASOP

Local/Regional Ombudsmen Audience members: Laurie Abounader (NC); Tonya Amos (IA); ); Heather Armstrong (NC); Eileen Bennett (MD); Mary Helen Brainard (VA); Jacqueline Case (NY/NJ); Karen Crawford (AL); Sherry Culp (KY); Bettye Dixie (AL); Stacy Farry (AL); James Getz (MD); Karen Guice (AL); Kaitin Hannon (IL); Kelly Hopkins (MO); David Jacobs (MI); Joe Oertel (WA); Debi Lee (NC); Milissa Lake-Spencer (IN); Helen Martaus (OH); Vicki Michael (IL); Ruth Morgan (KY); Diane Persson (TX); Evelyn Shaw (AL); Paul Tosch (WA); John Weir (MI); "Tammie" (Camille) White (TX);

Guest: Greta Mang (AZ – Acting State ombudsman)

NEW BUSINESS:

Frank Burns, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Center for Wellness and Community Based Services and Director, Office of Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs was introduced by Jackie Case. He remarked that there are times that he hears the aging network programs funded under the Older Americans Act (OAA) sometimes feel invisible in Washington DC. Some well-meaning legislation (including the Paperwork Reduction Act) created an effect that makes smaller programs unknown because there are rare opportunities to show what you produce and congressional members in Washington DC do not get a chance to see your programs in action. The Government Performance and Results Act is a correction which gives the ombudsman program an opportunity to show the effect of programs and there is a way for more visible demonstration to Congress about the positive effects by taking the oldest information (data) available, compare it to recent activities, and use it to show justification to support the programs and potential growth.

Sue Wheaton, AoA Ombudsman Program Specialist, introduced Barbara Dieker and Brandt Chvirko, who stated they will be remaining at the conference for the remainder of the day and available to further discuss the overviews being provided. Sue Wheaton distributed the Emergency Planning Checklist that was developed as jointly by DHHS and CMS as a tool for long term care facilities and ombudsmen. AoA suggests that ombudsmen programs share this information with interested parties and suggest review of its contents on an annual basis. Sue also shared charted information that is a 10-year profile compilation of NORS data. Each state ombudsman will be receiving state specific information that can be compared with the national data. It can help states and their regional and local programs identify strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to close any gaps.

Frank Burns indicated that this will be most helpful in identifying the most significant data elements and explaining ombudsman accomplishments in terms that leaders in Washington will understand. It highlights the complete program and underscores the impact of a very high percentage of volunteers. Frank stated that he feels there is no other program that parallels this complaint resolution data and it is unprecedented that such a vast majority of the work includes a volunteer component. Frank states that this is a phenomenal statistic that it speaks volumes of the unique status of the ltc ombudsman program. It is outstanding to achieve positive results at a very low cost. AoA can now show others in the federal government the results are positive and constructive relationships. However, Frank states, there is no free program and the challenge is to seek funding through all potential resources as the government programs continue to evolve. Ombudsman and other core aging services programs need to look beyond the small increases in the line item budget. They need to look toward other funding connections to supplement base services.

Frank Burns continued to reflect on the message from Josefina Carbonell, Assistant Secretary, DHHS Administration

on Aging. The aging network needs to continue to integrate and better organize community based services to avoid nursing home and other long term care placements in diversion services. AoA is pursuing development of alternatives and believes to properly modernize and rebalance the long term care system. It is expected to require an investment of \$5Billion over the next 10 years to modernize and integrate access to community services to avoid long term care placements in the first place. In order to achieve this modernization, there needs to be utilization of the full network, and Frank sees opportunities to identify where the ombudsman program can be an integral part of this objective. The "CHOICES Initiative" is about developing the Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) and ombudsman programs are in a position to help identify people that are in the cycle that would benefit from community based services. Individuals should not go into a long term care setting permanently upon their first visit. The healthcare is a cycle where individuals should be able to receive services in a setting where they want to be and have the support systems available to provide the care. Nursing homes should be viewed as one option in a continuum of services. Franks states that the challenge is to find a way to bring the CHOICES Initiative with its resources into the role provided by long term care ombudsmen. He states that it is a challenge to become part of the investment, however, states that submit proposals that include the services of the long term care ombudsman will be seen as stronger in the review process. AoA wants to help identify these potential roles and expand best practices, ensuring we move forward to obtain some of the funding. All of the grants will be competitive demonstration grants. Applications for the grants that include the full range of partners, including ombudsman services necessary to rebalance the long term care system will be considered the strongest proposals. AoA's challenge is to bring the ombudsman program into the process throughout the multiple stages. Frank concluded with continuing to build constructive relationships and partnerships with the groups like NALLTCO which represent a concentrated group of professionals that are experts in the field of advocacy and complaint resolution. He encouraged the ombudsman network to continue to make the data stronger and more reflective of the work accomplished.

Alice Hedt, NCCNHR Executive Director, shared remarks with the group. She stated that NALLTCO is more visible than ever at the national level. There has been such enormous growth from the membership involvement in making the connections that are required to receive recognition. She stated that having Frank Burns, from AoA, speak directly with the membership is a reflection on the prominence and status of the organization. Alice knows there is still a long way to go in the challenge of increased membership in NALLTCO and NCCNHR, and she is committed to continuing partnerships with ombudsmen at every level. Alice noted that she began her career as a regional ombudsman in North Carolina, and she will never forget the feeling of being isolated in her efforts until she became connected with the NCCNHR network. She supports the efforts of NALLTCO and its dedication toward continued professional standards in the work we accomplish. Alice gave a special thanks to one local ombudsman from Texas, Diane Perrson who suggest the RFP process for sessions offered at the conference this year and a personal thanks to the local ombudsman in Idaho, Liz Delaney, who was so helpful in Alice's personal endeavors regarding care for her own mother.

#### MINUTES FROM 2006 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

Handouts were available to all in attendance and had previously been posted in the NALLTCO newsletter. Debi Lee (NC) motioned that the minutes be accepted as presented, Joe Oertel seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

#### STATE COORDINATOR'S REPORT:

Prepared by Alice Nicholson (VT) was made available as handouts and had been reviewed by the NALLTCO Board. There are 20 state coordinators, covering 21 states. NALLTCO currently has 25 states with members. Joe Oertel (WA) motioned that the report be accepted as presented, Debi Lee (NC) seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT: The NALLTCO treasury balance is currently: \$2,493.02.

Prepared by Beth Simpson was made available as handouts and had been reviewed by the NALLTCO Board. The NALLTCO treasury balance is currently: \$2,493.02. John Weir (MI) motioned that the report be accepted as presented, Sherry Culp seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

#### LIASION REPORT:

Prepared by Eileen Bennett was made available as handouts and had been reviewed by the NALLTCO Board. Deb Lee motioned that the report be accepted as presented, Joe Oertel seconded, and the motion was carried with one abstention by the secretary.

#### ELECTION of 2008 BOARD MEMBERS:

Sherry Culp (KY) motioned the slate of candidates presented by the nominating committee be unanimously elected, Debi Lee seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously. Newly elected board members in the room, Tonya Amos (IA) and Karen Guice (AL) were acknowledged by Jackie Case. Continuing terms for John Weir and Jackie Case were acknowledged. The officers will be elected from among the Board on November 14, 2007.

#### 2008 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN:

Jackie Case announced a new membership campaign which will begin in November and last through June 30<sup>th</sup> for the 2008 membership year. For individuals who bring two new members into the organization, they will receive credit for one free membership of similar status\*. They may choose to use the credit toward their own membership or give it to another individual who would like to become a member. (\$25 value for paid staff / \$10 for unpaid or volunteer staff).

\*This offer does not extend to the dual NCCNHR membership status.

#### GUEST SPEAKERS:

Lori Smetanka, Director, National Ombudsman Resource Center spoke about the renewed grant cycle with AoA. The Center received a three-year grant and partners with NASUA for some sub-contracted services. There have been some staff changes at the Center. Lori is now the liaison between NORC and NALLTCO. Julia Meashey, Ombudsman Specialist, resigned her position and they are actively interviewing candidates for her replacement. Deanna Okrent, website consultant, has also left and her duties are being divided. Rhashida Beynum is the NORC Information Specialist and she is responsible for the ombudsman portion of the website. The center's web address is [www.ltombudman.org](http://www.ltombudman.org). Lori encouraged local and regional ombudsman to send copies of materials they develop so that the Center can share best practices and identify trends. Lori referenced the information collected through the Survey Monkey poll indicated that ombudsman want NORC to provide continued training, volunteer management support, and best practice availability for easy reference. Lori reminded audience members about the recent white paper on the Ombudsman Role in Culture Change and the training module powerpoint to compliment the book Nursing Homes: Getting Good Care There, both developed by Sara Hunt. Lori also referenced the self-monitoring tool developed for local and regional programs by Robyn Grant who is a consultant to NORC. Lori stated that NCCNHR heard at last year's NALLTCO meeting that the resident rights information was often too late for use, and they worked diligently to prepare the packet information for release in early summer this year. The audience expressed their gratitude.

#### Jeanne Yordi – NASOP (National Association of State Ombudsman Programs)

Jeanne came on behalf of Beverly Laubert, NASOP chair. The state ombudsmen committees are working on the draft OAA regulations, in case the organization is ever called upon for input during a promulgation process. NASOP continues to build their relationship with NASUA during changes in new leadership for that organization. NASOP continues discussions with AoA regarding systems advocacy as delegated to the ombudsman under OAA and identifying those states where the ombudsman is silenced in legislative and other systemic areas. They are anxiously waiting for the release of the ORT (Ombudsman Reporting Tool) and the 4<sup>th</sup> part of NORS training which will address “program activities” and collecting uniform data. State ombudsmen are continuously challenged to professionalize the type of work being done in our area of expertise. The state ombudsmen and their association recognize the significant work done by regional and local ombudsmen and thank each and every one of us for all that we do.

Jeanne Yordi also shared the announcement that Synergy Software, developer of ombudsmanager, is merging with Harmony Information Systems effective October 25, 2007. Ombudsmanager is a data management software used in 30 states for NORS and daily program operations. She had just left the Ombudsmanager Users group meeting that was scheduled at the same time.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

##### CODE OF ETHICS:

The draft document was presented to audience members. Jackie Case shared that this document is an expansion based on the twelve principles adopted by NASOP. Debi Lee (NC) explained that this gives standard of practice to our profession and tries to capture elements of the important issues that challenge long term care ombudsmen in their daily work. Debi gave many thanks to Karen Hausrath (WA) for her work as chair on this committee. NALLTCO members are encouraged to provide feedback. The entire document will be posted on the website by November 15,

2007 and included in the newsletter. Comments will be due back by January 31<sup>st</sup> and will be reviewed by the NALLTCO Board and committee members. Revisions will be incorporated into the document and sent out to membership for vote in the Spring.

**THANKS and APPRECIATION:**

Jackie Case acknowledged the service of three Board members that are rotating off. Debi Lee was presented with a service plaque earlier in the year for her leadership as NALLTCO Chair for four years and received an additional certificate of appreciation from the organization. Sherry Culp (KY) and vice chair for this past year and Beth Simpson (MO) and treasurer for several years were awarded certificates of appreciation from the organization. They will continue to be active general members and may serve on committees in the future.

The 2008 General Membership meeting will be planned in conjunction with the annual 2008 NCCNHR conference.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm EDT.