

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT ABOUT NURSING HOME CARE

How to File a Complaint About Nursing Home Care

If you or someone you know is experiencing poor care or mistreatment in a nursing home, it's important to take action. Filing a complaint can lead to improvements in care and ensure that residents' rights are protected. The following instructions outline the steps you should take to make a formal complaint about nursing home care in the United States.

Step 1: Identify the Issue

Before filing a complaint, clearly identify and document the specific concerns. Common issues include:

- Neglect or lack of proper care
- Abuse (physical, emotional, or financial)
- Unsanitary conditions
- Medication errors
- Violation of resident rights
- Staff shortages or misconduct

Write down the details, including dates, times, names of those involved, and any other relevant information.

Step 2: Attempt to Resolve Internally

Many issues can be resolved by speaking directly to the nursing home staff or management. You can:

- Talk to the nurse in charge or the facility administrator
- Request a meeting with the director of nursing
- Contact the facility's social worker or Long-Term Care Ombudsman

If the issue is not resolved or if you feel uncomfortable doing this, proceed to the next step.

Step 3: Contact the State Agency

Each state has a designated agency responsible for investigating complaints about nursing home care. This is usually the Department of Health or a similar regulatory body.

To file a complaint in Maryland, contact the **Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ)**



7120 Samuel Morse Drive, Second Floor, Columbia, MD 21046-3422

Phone: 410-402-8108 or Toll Free at 877-402-8219 Fax: 410-402-8234

Website: <https://health.maryland.gov/ohcq>

Step 4: Contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman is an advocate for nursing home residents. You can reach out to your local ombudsman for assistance in resolving complaints and protecting residents' rights.

Contact information for Upper Shore Aging, Inc. Ombudsman:



Deborah Nicholson

Office: 410-778-5690

Cell: 443-666-0421

Email: dnicholson@uppershoreaging.org

Additional Resources

[Advocacy Assistance – Upper Shore Aging](#)

Step 5: Other Avenues

- If you suspect a crime (such as assault or theft), contact your local police department.
- Consult legal counsel if the situation is severe or if you are considering legal action.

Step 6: Follow Up

After filing a complaint, keep track of any communications with agencies or the facility. Ask for updates and follow up if you do not hear back within a reasonable time frame.

Complaint Procedure: Additional Tips

1. A complaint may be made to the nursing facility in person, orally or in writing, by telephone or by mail and may be reported anonymously;
2. A nursing facility may not request the signature of the resident or, when applicable, the resident's representative or an interested individual on a complaint;
3. If a complaint is presented to a nursing facility, the nursing facility shall investigate within 30 days of the allegations made in the complaint and advise the complainant of the action the nursing facility is taking to resolve the complaint;
4. A nursing facility shall send to the Office and the Department a copy of any complaint that a complainant indicates has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
5. A nursing facility shall maintain a permanent record for inspection by the Office or the Department of all complaints concerning the nursing facility;
6. A complainant may request a hearing from the Department within 30 days of receiving the facility's response to the complaint or within 60 days of filing the complaint, whichever is earlier; and
7. The facility administrator and staff may not retaliate against you for making a complaint.



TALBOT
COUNTY
Commission on
Aging

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