

What You Can Do



We all want the best quality of care for loved ones living in a nursing home. A family council will help achieve a higher level of communication between family and staff by helping guide the nursing home toward person-centered care.

Every family council needs support.

YOU can be a part of your council.

Please:

- **Attend the meetings faithfully**
- **Voice your concerns and praise at the meetings and listen while others voice their opinions**
- **Help promote the council**
- **Adhere to the “ground rules” of the council**
- **Do your part in making the council an effective cohesive group**

For more information regarding family councils, contact:

Office of the State Long-Term Care
Ombudsman
PO BOX 570
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Phone: 1-800-309-3282

Fax: 573-751-6499

Email: LTCOmbudsman@health.mo.gov

<http://health.mo.gov/seniors/ombudsman/publications.php>



Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services toll-free at 1-800-309-3282.

Hearing- and speech-impaired citizens can dial 711.

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Family Councils



Strength in Numbers

Families working together to ensure quality nursing home care

Family Councils

A family council is an independent, self-led group of families and friends of nursing home residents that:

- Works together to protect and improve the quality of life and quality of care for residents
- Provides families with a voice in decision making that affects their loved ones



Federal law says the family and friends of nursing home residents have the right to organize and hold regular private meetings, known as “**family council**” meetings. Nursing homes in the Medicare and Medicaid programs must:

- Allow families to meet with other families
- Provide a meeting space
- Respond to the group’s concerns

Benefits:

- **Allows families to give each other the support, encouragement, and information they need**
- **Provides family members with an opportunity to express their ideas and concerns and a way to work for positive change**
- **Reduces a family’s sense of isolation, helplessness and frustration by improving the quality of life and care for residents**
- **Allows the nursing home staff to deal directly with families’ concerns and ideas, to convey information to families, and to establish meaningful lines of communication**
- **Serves as a sounding board and advisory body on new ideas and improvements**
- **Encourages discussion and action on shared concerns**
- **Gives families an opportunity to shape nursing home policies and procedures affecting their loved ones**

What a Family Council Is Not

- If a nursing home sets up, leads, or influences the direction, discussions or focus of the family council, then it is **not** a family council.

A family council is independent of nursing home management and is not under its influence.

- A family council is **not** a family support group or just a volunteer group.

What a Family Council Is

- A self-led, self-determined group that works together to improve the quality of life for nursing home residents
- The council works in partnership with nursing home administration and staff to solve problems and ensure that residents receive the best possible care.

Key Components of Family Councils

- **Communication**
- **Leadership**
- **Improvement**
- **Relationship**
- **Thoughtfulness**

