



STOP ABUSE, NEGLECT & POOR QUALITY SERVICES



Nursing Homes

This fact sheet answers:

- What is abuse?
- What is neglect?
- What are examples of poor quality services?
- How do you report problems?
- How to protect yourself or others from more harm?

People with disabilities have the right to be free from abuse and neglect and to get quality services from their providers.

If you live in a nursing home, there are different ways to get help if you are being abused, neglected, or not getting the services you need.

What is abuse?

There are a lot of different kinds of abuse, including:

- Physical abuse, like hitting, pushing or kicking someone.
- Emotional abuse, like threatening, yelling at or being mean to someone.
- Sexual abuse, like forcing or tricking someone to do something sexual.
- Financial abuse, like taking someone's money or things.
- Isolation, like stopping someone from talking to other people or getting help.

What is neglect?

Neglect is not giving someone the care they need to be healthy or safe, including:

- Not taking someone to see a doctor if they are sick.
- Not giving someone enough food or not noticing if they lose a lot of weight.
- Not following plans to help keep someone safe.
- Leaving someone alone when there should be staff there.
- Not protecting someone when another person is abusing them.

What are examples of poor services?

When someone lives in a nursing home, they have a right to help plan what their services will be. They also have a right to get the services that are in their plan. They have a right to have their basic rights and needs met. Some examples of poor quality services are:

- Not giving someone privacy.
- Not helping someone work on their goals.
- Not helping people buy the things they need.
- Not letting someone have visitors.

How do you report abuse or neglect?

When staff at a nursing home is abusive or neglects someone, it is important to report it as soon as possible.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) looks into abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of people living in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities and hospitals.

To report abuse or neglect, call the IDPH Hotline at **1-800-252-4343**. IDPH must look into all cases where the victim is at risk of harm within 24 hours. IDPH should look into all reports of abuse or neglect within seven days and all other reports within 30 days.

IDPH's hotline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The person taking your call will ask you questions that can include:

- The victim's name, address, telephone number, age, and condition
- The name of the person who did the abuse or neglect
- Details about what happened
- If the victim is in danger
- Names and contact information



Once they get the report, the nursing home must try to protect the victim right away.

If the person that did the abuse or neglect does not work for the nursing home, and instead is a guardian, power of attorney or someone else in the community, you should call the Adult Protective Services (APS) Hotline at **1-866-800-1409**. APS will visit the victim and may talk to other people and agencies. If APS thinks that abuse or neglect happened, it will work with the victim and others to help create a plan that can include services to help stop future abuse and neglect.

How do you report poor quality services?

When someone gets poor quality services in a nursing home there are a few places to call for help.

First, call the IDPH Hotline at **1-800-252-4343** to report your concern.

Second, call the “Ombudsman” or “Ombuds” program. The Ombuds can help you solve your complaints about the nursing home. You can find an Ombuds by calling **1-800-252-8966**, by email: Aging.SLTCOProgram@illinois.gov, or by looking here: <https://ilaging.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/aging/programs/lcambudsman/documents/lcambudsman-contact-list.pdf>.

If you still have problems after calling the above two places, call Equip for Equality at **1-800-537-2632**.

How do I protect myself or others from more harm?

There are many things you can do for yourself or others for protection from harm. The following are some of the things that you can do:

Call the police: If someone is in danger, call 911.

Order of Protection: You can ask for an Order of Protection in court to protect yourself or others from abuse or neglect. Do this if a disability makes it hard to stop the problem and if a family or household member is the person doing the abuse or neglect.

“Family or household members” are people related to the victim, people related to the victim’s spouse or former spouse, or someone the victim is or was dating. They are also people who live with or used to live with the victim. Personal assistants and caregivers of the victim are also “family or household members.”. See Equip for Equality’s “**Orders of Protection for People with Disabilities**” fact sheet for more information.

Informal advocacy: People who abuse or neglect may be less likely to do that if someone else is around. Just having someone else help and make themselves known can help. Also, just knowing that someone is involved and giving help may result in more action being taken for the victim after a report has been made. If the person doing the harmful things is an employee where the victim lives, think about asking for that employee to be removed or replaced. ■



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Have More Questions?

Call Equip for Equality.

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