

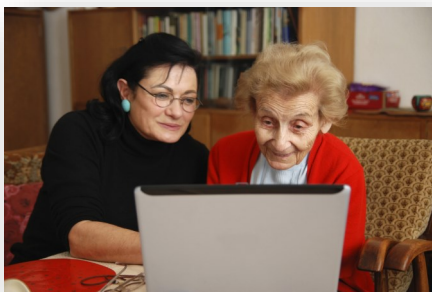
What is a family council?

Under federal law, family members in a long-term care facility can join together to form a united consumer voice which can communicate concerns to facility administrators and work for resolutions and improvements by forming an independent family council.

Family councils can play a crucial role in voicing concerns, requesting improvements, supporting new family members and residents and supporting facility efforts to work for high quality of care and life in the facility.

**Join and support the family council
at your loved one's facility!**

If no family council exists, join with other family members to form one. Learn more by visiting the Family Council Center at <http://theconsumervoice.org/issues/family/family-council-center>



The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care was founded out of public concern for the quality of care in nursing homes by Elma L. Holder as the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR). Consumer Voice represents consumers and advocates for public policies that support quality care and quality of life in all long-term care settings. Consumer Voice also advocates for a strong, sufficient direct-care workforce, and promotes best practices in delivering quality care. We accomplish these efforts through:

- **Advocating** for public policies that support quality of care and life;
- **Empowering** and **educating** consumers and families;
- **Training** and **supporting** individuals and groups to advocate for and empower consumers; and
- **Promoting** the critical role of direct-care workers and best practices in quality-care delivery.



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**Empowered, Effective,
and Independent**

FAMILY COUNCILS



The National
CONSUMER VOICE
for Quality Long-Term Care

Family Council Rights

Under the 1987 Nursing Home Reform Act

- Families have the right to organize and participate in a family council.
- The facility must provide a family group with private space if a group exists.
- The facility must make residents and family members aware of upcoming meetings in a timely manner.
- Staff, residents, or visitors may attend meetings at the group's invitation.
- The facility must provide a designated staff person, who is approved by the family group, responsible for providing assistance and responding to written requests that result from group meetings.
- When a family group exists, the facility must listen to the views and act upon the grievances and recommendations concerning proposed policy and operational decisions affecting resident care and life in the facility. The facility must be able to demonstrate their response and rationale for such a response.



Resources

The Consumer Voice has resources, information, and opportunities for family councils. Visit <http://theconsumervoice.org/issues/family/family-council-center> to learn more.

The Family Council Center contains information, tips, and tools such as

- Fact sheets
- Ways to take action
- Sample council materials
- Resources on family council rights and federal laws and regulations

Tips & Best Practices

- Collect contact information using a sign-in sheet at meetings.
- Plan for the long-term stability of the council by putting a structure in place, such as by-laws, and developing leadership.
- Brainstorm about how to address concerns in the facility.
- Communicate regularly with facility staff and management about council concerns and suggestions, actions to be taken, events that will be held, etc.
- Establish contact with the long-term care ombudsman.
- Focus on common council goals. Identify and continuously assess progress.
- Follow procedures for conducting effective meetings, such as using agendas, keeping minutes, starting and ending meetings on time, sticking to the topics scheduled for discussion and "assigning" tasks to be accomplished before the next meeting.
- Remember results may not be immediate, but family councils that persevere can be very effective.

