



# Board on Aging and Long Term Care

## ADVOCACY PLATFORM: PILLARS

The Advocacy Pillars are a Board-approved, overarching set of ideals and principles guiding agency positions and actions related to legislation, administrative policy, and systemic improvements affecting those we serve. These pillars will act as a roadmap to develop BOALTC annual priorities.

I

### Promote Consumer Independence, Choice and Access

Every older adult has the fundamental right to live with dignity in the setting of their choice. Consumers must be the primary decision-makers in their own care and service delivery.

- **Access to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS):** Ensure that funding follows the individual, allowing older adults the choice to remain in their homes and community of their choice.
- **Person-Centered Care Standards:** Ensure that quality is defined by the individual's own preferences, values, and lifestyle choices, adapting care plans to the person.
- **Healthy Aging in Place:** Reduce barriers to independence and support access to programs that ensure the home remains a safe, viable setting for aging.
- **Rights in All Settings:** Promote quality standards and consistent protections for individuals regardless of whether they live in assisted living, nursing homes or receive HCBS program services in their private homes.

II

### Strengthen Consumer Support Systems

Older adults deserve care that respects their dignity, ensures their safety, and understands their unique personal needs. Quality care and resident safety are possible through a stable and well-supported caregiving infrastructure and independent advocacy.

- **Staffing as a Resident Right:** Support minimum mandatory staffing levels to ensure residents receive the high-quality, timely care they deserve.
- **Preserve Connection:** Support volunteer programs and ensure residents have the right to visitors, uninterrupted access to caregivers and their primary support systems.
- **Workforce Stability:** Encourage a competent workforce to provide person-centered quality care. A well-trained, supported workforce is a critical defense against elder abuse and neglect.
- **Empowerment Through Advocacy:** Advocate for expansion of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program to ensure residents have access to independent advocates.
- **Freedom From Retaliation:** Safeguard the rights of residents to voice grievances, participate in resident councils and communicate freely with advocates without fear of intimidation, retaliation or discrimination.

## III

## Support Transparency and Accountability Requirements

Long-term care and healthcare services must be delivered through a system that is transparent, measurable, and held to the highest standards.

- **Transparency in Ownership and Financing:** Advocate for full disclosure of complex ownership structures, including private equity interests, to ensure accountability for care outcomes.
- **Direct Care Investment:** Advocate for policies that prioritize resident services to ensure resources are focused on direct care delivery, the resident experience, and well-being.
- **Consumer Access to Quality Data:** Support the expansion and publication of easy-to-understand, high-quality data to empower consumers to make informed, confident choices.
- **Meaningful Enforcement:** Support a robust survey, inspection and enforcement system that provides oversight and prompt response to consumer complaints.

## IV

## Navigate Benefits with Confidence

Consumers should be fully informed and supported to navigate their benefits and healthcare options with confidence, free from deceptive practices and prohibitive costs.

- **Navigating Healthcare Access:** Support Medicare beneficiaries in understanding and accessing affordable healthcare and insurance options through education, counseling, and informed decision-making.
- **Protecting Unbiased Guidance:** Advocate for increased funding for State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) to provide consumers with expert, neutral guidance on complex benefit systems.
- **Consumer Protection from Deceptive Marketing:** Empower individuals to recognize predatory or misleading marketing and provide clear pathways to report practices that undermine informed choice.
- **Prescription Drug Affordability:** Support policies that negotiate drug prices and expand cost-sharing protections to ensure life-saving medications are not out of reach.
- **Benefit Coordination:** Advocate for effective coordination for dual-eligible individuals who have both Medicare and Medicaid coverage.

## V

## Defend Elder Justice and Rights

The legal rights and financial assets of older adults must be protected through robust advocacy, oversight, and increased access to the justice system. Long-term care residents should not lose their constitutional or civil rights because of where they live.

- **Long Term Care Ombudsman Program:** Advocate for full funding and independence for the Ombudsman Program to ensure it can effectively investigate complaints and protect resident rights.
- **Elder Abuse Prevention and Legal Autonomy:** Advocate for elder justice initiatives and promote alternatives to guardianship that expand autonomy while preserving due process and individual rights.
- **Education and Resources:** Promote coordinated communication and referrals within the aging and disability networks to ensure consumers are informed of resources and know how to access them.