

# Elder Advocate

Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa and Solano



## Message from our Executive Director

November was National Caregiver Support Month. Here at Ombudsman Services, we spend a lot of time discussing, training, and supporting professional caregivers—primarily the frontline staff in long-term care facilities. We are also a resource for family and at-home caregivers. These are the important individuals who make it possible for seniors to stay in their homes—“age-in-place.” Caregiving is a hard job that requires some unique skills and ongoing education. If a caregiver is looking after someone you know, check in with them. Let them know we are a resource and if we can’t help, we most certainly will put them in touch with someone who can!

October’s fires in Napa and Sonoma County were a wake-up call for many of us. An overwhelming number of the fires’ fatalities were people over 65. While already a priority objective for 2018, we’ve moved up the timeline to launch our

Emergency Preparedness Initiative, which will include a series of events that address relevant issues such as isolation and speed of evacuation in emergency preparedness, and will feature expert speakers. In addition, we will continue to work to formalize emergency communication between our region’s long-term care facilities, and make sure they are all connected to the Emergency Management Services. We look forward to sharing more about this and other 2018 initiatives in future newsletters.

Thank you for being an advocate of our work. Together we will continue to fight for legislation that will protect our aging community and their families (see inside highlights), respond to the evolving needs of seniors (like emergency preparedness), and support the many caregivers that provide essential services in facilities and at home.

Best,  
Nicole Howell

*“Caregiving is so much more than providing assistance with cooking and cleaning. It is about keeping track of meds, listening to bathroom stories, not commenting on the spilled sugar, being prepared to make a second meal if the first isn’t right. All of this plus more; delivered with compassion and without taking anything personally.”*

—Family Caregiver

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# Legislative Update

## Nursing Home Rules

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is considering a delay of implementation of the revised federal nursing home regulations. The new regulations provide important protections for residents. Let's let CMS know that weakening the regulations or delaying the process puts long-term care resident's lives at risk and is unacceptable! **Call your representative today and let them know you support the implementation and preservation of the Nursing Home Rules.**

## Assembly Bill No. 940

Approved by the Governor of California on September 25, 2017, AB 940 will require long-term health care facilities to notify the local long-term care ombudsman if a resident is notified in writing of a facility-initiated transfer or discharge from the facility, as specified. The bill would provide that a failure to timely provide a copy of that notice would constitute a class B violation for purposes of a department-issued citation. For long-term care residents, this bill adds a layer of protection by ensuring that a resident has a written notification of a scheduled discharge and has access to an ombudsman to ensure their rights are protected and are not sent home prematurely or to an inappropriate placement e.g. homeless shelter or hotel.

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## Who & Where We Serve

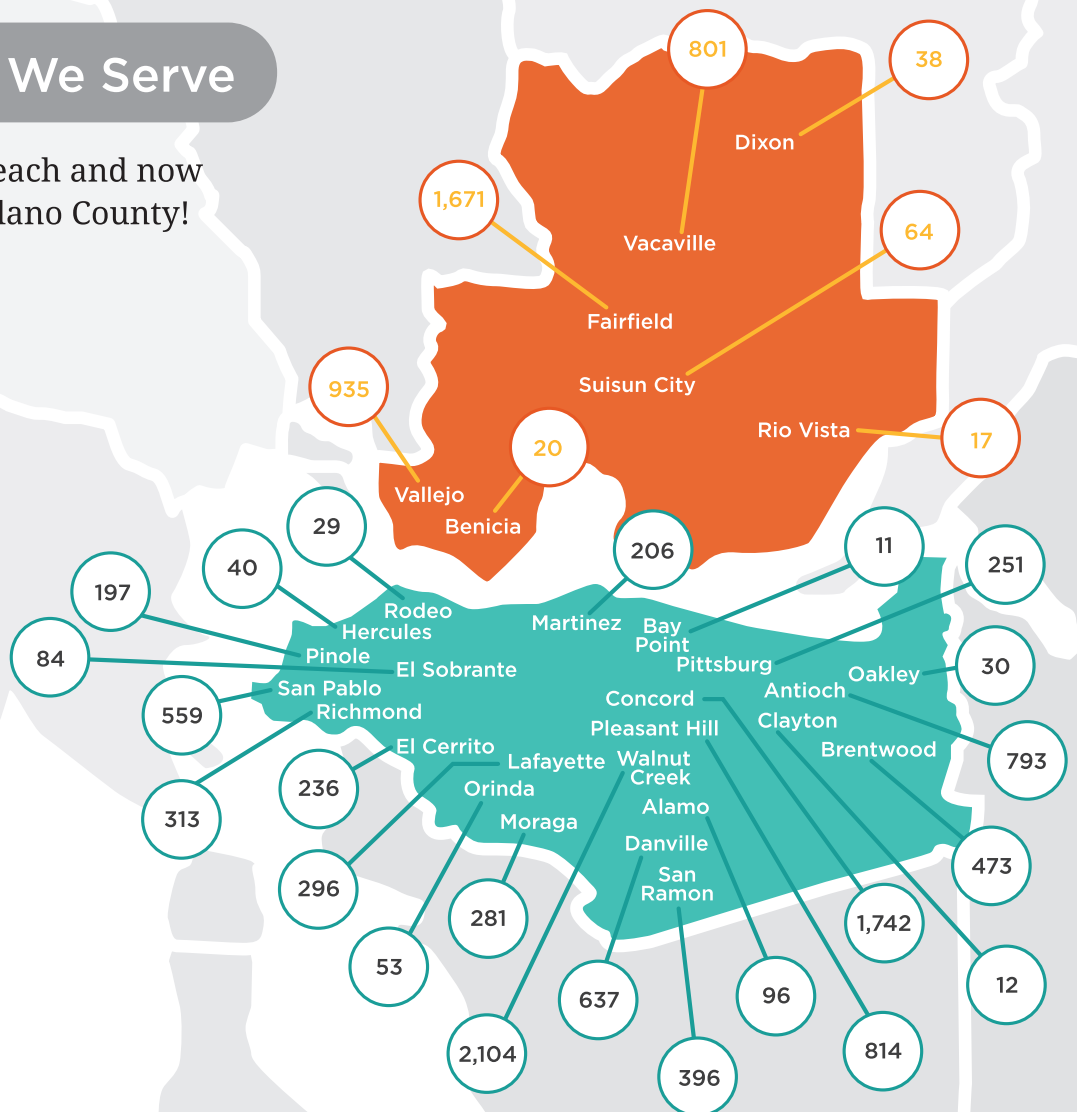
We've extended our reach and now provide services in Solano County!

### Solano County

We serve **3,546** residents in Solano County's **140** long-term care facilities.

### Contra Costa County

We serve **9,653** residents in Contra Costa County's **423** long-term care facilities.



### Senate Bill No. 219

Approved by the Governor of California on October 5, 2017, SB 219 prohibits LTC facility staff from discriminating against or denying care to seniors based on a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) status. This important legislation will ensure that residents who identify as LGBTQI or are HIV positive will be assured of the highest quality of care and protections and that facility staff will receive additional training on how to ensure the preservation of all long-term care residents rights, with a particular emphasis on LGBTQI individuals and their families. This is particularly important in the San Francisco Bay Area, which has always been a leader in equality and protections regardless of sexual preference or gender identity.

## Resident Spotlight

# Lost in Translation

Alana was considered a disruptive and difficult resident by facility staff and even her family. She did not speak English and she relied on her relatives to communicate. When Jay Carter, the Ombudsman and Regional Supervisor intervened, it was clear that something was being lost in translation. She immediately set to work to find an outside interpreter—not an easy task given the specific dialect spoken by Alana and her family. Within a week a translator was brought in to help. It turns out Alana had concerns about food, access to her children (not the relatives involved), and a few other care issues. The facility staff were able to address her concerns and Alana has been fine since. The interpreter continues to be a part of the care planning process at the facilities expense and Alana enjoys chatting with her during care meetings.



*“Getting an interpreter gave Alana a sense of agency and has significantly improved her quality of life.”*

— Jay Carter  
Regional Supervisor

# Become a Volunteer

There are a number of ways to volunteer, from becoming a trained Field Ombudsman to helping out in the office. As a Field Ombudsman you will be part of a staff-supported team of volunteers with countless opportunities to make an immediate impact on the safety and quality of life of those living in long-term care facilities.

If you would like to learn more about our upcoming volunteer trainings, leadership opportunities on the board, the MSW Internship Program, or other ways to give of your time, **please contact Nicole Howell. 925.384.1124**

## Calendar of Events

# SaveDate THE Date

### Facility Education Event for Leadership & Staff

**April 24, 2018**

Pleasant Hill Community Center

#### Who Should Attend:

- Long term care administrators
- Directors and managers
- Direct care staff including: nurses, social workers, activity professionals
- In-direct care staff including: kitchen staff, maintenance staff



## June 2018

### Elder Abuse Awareness Month

A call-to-action for individuals, organizations and communities around the world to raise awareness about and promote a better understanding of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.



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