

PUBLIC HEALTH CODE (EXCERPT)
Act 368 of 1978

333.21763 Access to nursing home patients; purposes; requirements; termination of visit; confidentiality; complaint; determination; prohibited entry.

Sec. 21763.

(1) A nursing home shall permit a representative of an approved organization, who is known by the nursing home administration to be authorized to represent the organization or who carries identification showing that the representative is authorized to represent the organization, a family member of a patient, or a legal representative of a patient, to have access to nursing home patients for 1 or more of the following purposes:

- (a) Visit, talk with, and make personal, social, and legal services available to the patients.
- (b) Inform patients of their rights and entitlements, and their corresponding obligations, under federal and state laws by means of the distribution of educational materials and discussion in groups and with individual patients.
- (c) Assist patients in asserting their legal rights regarding claims for public assistance, medical assistance, and social services benefits, as well as in all matters in which patients are aggrieved. Assistance may be provided individually or on a group basis and may include organizational activity and counseling and litigation.
- (d) Engage in other methods of assisting, advising, and representing patients so as to extend to them the full enjoyment of their rights.

(2) Access as prescribed in subsection (1) must be permitted during regular visiting hours each day. A representative of an approved organization entering a nursing home under this section promptly shall advise the nursing home administrator or the acting administrator or other available agent of the nursing home of the representative's presence. A representative shall not enter the living area of a patient without identifying himself or herself to the patient and without receiving the patient's permission to enter. A representative shall use only patient areas of the home to carry out the activities described in subsection (1).

(3) A patient may terminate a visit by a representative permitted access under subsection (1). Communications between a patient and the representative are confidential, unless otherwise authorized by the patient.

(4) If a nursing home administrator or employee believes that an individual or organization permitted access under this section is acting or has acted in a manner detrimental to the health or safety of patients in the nursing home, the nursing home administrator or employee may file an anonymous complaint with department. On the receipt of a complaint, department staff shall investigate the allegations made in the complaint. The department shall make a determination regarding proper resolution of the complaint based on the results of the investigation. Written notification of the department's determination and recommendations shall be given to the complainant and the individual or organization against whom the complaint was made.

(5) An individual shall not enter upon the premises of a nursing home for the purpose of engaging in an activity that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested and that actually causes a nursing home employee, patient, or visitor to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested. This subsection does not prohibit constitutionally protected activity or conduct that serves a legitimate purpose including, but not limited to, activities or conduct allowed under subsection (1).

History: Add. 1978, Act 493, Eff. Mar. 30, 1979 ;-- Am. 1996, Act 546, Eff. Mar. 31, 1997 ;-- Am. 2022, Act 187, Imd. Eff. July 25, 2022
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