



ICARE

Infection Control Advocate & Resident Education (ICARE): Q&A for Ombudsman



What is ICARE? (Goals)

- ♦ ICARE aims to educate, engage, and empower all people in a nursing home community to practice infection prevention and control (IPC) while respecting the rights and roles of residents and those closest to them for high-quality care.
- ♦ ICARE provides stepwise educational and engagement tools to promote a nursing home community culture that empowers staff, respects residents, and reinforces relationships.

Why was ICARE Developed? (Objectives)

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrated the major impact that infections and their spread can have in nursing home communities. The greatest impact on residents came in the suspension of basic rights, leading to a decline in resident's overall physical, social, and mental health. Therefore, ICARE will help participants understand:

- ♦ Basics principles of preventing and controlling the spread of disease in a nursing home environment.
- ♦ The role of resident rights and preventing and controlling infections to achieve quality care.
- ♦ To engage everyone in a nursing home community for effective IPC strategies that preserve resident rights and physical and psychosocial health.

Do I Need to Know Infection Control? (Learning Tools)

- ♦ As a long-term care ombudsman, learning the basics about IPC standards and requirements can help you protect and promote resident rights and quality care in this important, high-volume complaint area.
- ♦ Similar to other areas of concern in a nursing home facility, such as transfers, discharges, abuse, and neglect, your job is not to be the subject matter expert in IPC and quality care but to know key roles, requirements, and special situations as they apply to your role in helping residents.
- ♦ The ICARE program provides several tools to help you learn the fundamentals of IPC and quality care. This includes learning lessons, video clips, handouts, and guides. See the [ICARE website](#) to access these materials.
- ♦ Once you know these fundamentals, you can Educate, Engage, and Empower those in the nursing home community to promote and practice quality care through infection prevention and control.

Proceed to the next page to learn how to Educate, Engage, and Empower with ICARE!



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How Can I Help Educate with ICARE? (Education Tools)

- ICARE online lessons and video clips are not only available to help you learn the basics of IPC and quality care, but they can also be shared with residents, family members, and staff to help them learn.
- The best way to ensure you provide active education to those in the nursing home community is to teach the ICARE lessons in person.
- ICARE lesson slides with content and notes that you can tailor to your community and situation are available. Slide notes include a recommended Script, Ombudsman Notes with general information to help you teach ICARE, and a “Know Before You Go” section that provides more detailed information regarding the topic covered so you are prepared before you present. Lastly, there is a References & Resources section to find more information on the topic.

How Can I Help Engage with ICARE? (Engagement Tools)

- Engagement focuses on working with those in key roles in the nursing home community to help residents discover **HOW** infections are prevented and controlled in their specific community, and **WHO** in these key roles improves and maintains IPC for quality care.
- Key roles within the nursing home community include the nursing home administrator and infection preventionist. Key roles external to the nursing home include staff from governmental and quality agencies such as public health epidemiologists and the quality improvement organization (QIO).
- The ICARE Advocacy and Discussion section in the ICARE slides suggests the next steps to help residents engage with those in key roles. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Guide provides more detailed action steps for engagement. Please see the [ICARE website](#).

How Can I Help Empower with ICARE? (Empowerment Tools)

- Empowering people in a nursing home community (residents, families, staff, and leadership) focuses on active planning and collaboration to improve and maintain IPC for quality care.
- A major element of empowerment is working through the nursing home’s Quality Assurance and Assessment (QAA) Committee to make systematic, sustained change.
- The ICARE Advocacy and Discussion section in the ICARE slides suggests the next steps to help empower the nursing home community. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Guide provides more detailed action steps for empowerment. Please see the [ICARE website](#).

Want to know more? Contact your [nursing home advocate](#) or send an email to ICARE@unthsc.edu

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