



Independence Through Community

5930 Albervan Street  
Shawnee, KS 66216  
February 10, 2017

To the Committee regarding an Independent Ombudsman Program:

As the agency director at Jenian, Inc., supporting individuals on the Home and Community Based Service/Intellectual Developmental Disabilities Waiver, the individuals on our caseloads have personally experienced adverse issues compounded by the current Ombudsman program. When Kancare was implemented we were told that an ombudsman would work with our families to help them resolve problematic issues related to their services if they reached out to them. Unfortunately we have found this program to be lacking in substance and knowledge to assist them in resolving their concerns and problems.

Because of the lack of support from this office, we ended up telling our families to access the Disability Right Center (DRC). Unfortunately DRC, although very efficient and effective, does not have enough staff or resources to work with all of the families needing expert support. It is simply not feasible to expect this agency to do what the Ombudsman office was supposedly set up to do.

If the Ombudsman program was an independent office and not beholden to the Secretary and/or Governor our families would have assurance that problems could be resolved equitably. This office should be free from interference and independent from control or retaliation from the Governor's office. They should be free from conflicts of interest and should be able to secure changes and advocate on behalf of individuals needing support.

In order for Kancare to go forward and for families to know they have a program that looks after their needs without inherent conflicts of interest with the managed care organizations, providers and state agencies this program must be independent.

During the past Bob Bethel Oversight Committee Meetings I have personally listened to the data reported by the current ombudsman. We hear numbers of calls made into the office and the number of returned calls to the consumers. We do not hear of resolutions of issues or steps taken to resolve issues. I personally know that many of the families supported by our agency have contacted this office and have not had satisfactory resolutions to their problems.

An effective Ombudsman program would be a positive step for improving Kancare. We request this committee look into the Ombudsman Program and make the needed changes for individuals requesting proper and independent ombudsman support.

Respectfully,

Marilyn Kubler, MA

