

Class Concept

This is professional advocacy work for individuals with one or more disabilities who are patients/residents/consumers. These positions ensure patients'/residents' rights are protected while care and/or services are provided. Employees provide monitoring and consultative services to staff and management to ensure legislation, regulations and policies governing patients'/residents' rights are upheld. Some positions may be responsible for monitoring; this entails a daily presence throughout the facility with noted concerns being promptly addressed or communicated to facility management. Employees educate patients/residents/consumers, and also families/guardians as indicated, on their rights and empower them to self-advocate as they are able. Employees educate facility staff on patient/resident rights through informal, and sometimes formal, training.

Work includes initiating and conducting investigations when there is alleged or suspected neglect, abuse, exploitation, disagreement of services provided and other human rights violations of patients/residents/consumers. Employees also receive patient/resident/consumer complaints and grievances and work with management to ensure that due process occurs in the resolution of these. Complaints, grievances and allegations are received from a variety of sources, including patients/residents/consumers, families/guardians, staff, as well as other stakeholders. Findings of complaints, grievances and investigations are communicated to the Advocate II, if applicable, and shared with management for resolution by the facility and/or division management as necessary.

The work also includes constant availability to the staff, patients/residents/consumers and their families/guardians. Some positions may be required to participate in on-call coverage, with the expectation that employees return to the facility to address any pressing matters that occur after hours.

Recruitment Standard

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Knowledge of facility, division and department policies.
- Considerable knowledge of patient/resident rights and applicable laws and regulations (Federal and State) related to the disability group served.
- Ability to research applicable laws and regulations and apply the knowledge to daily work.
- Ability to investigate allegations or complaints, analyze findings and reach fact-based determinations.
- Ability to gain the confidence of patients/residents, and families/guardians as applicable, and to work effectively with them Ability to maintain effective, yet objective, working relationships with staff and managers, and negotiate issues to reach a resolution.

Minimum Education & Experience

Master's degree in a human services program from an appropriately accredited institution and two years of the experience providing services (diagnostic and treatment, advocacy, and/or casework) for individuals who are developmentally, physically, or mentally disabled; or

Bachelor's degree in a human services field from an appropriately accredited institution and three years of experience providing services (diagnostic and treatment, advocacy, and/or casework) for individuals who are developmentally, physically, or mentally disabled; or

Bachelor's degree in a human services field from an appropriately accredited institution and four years of human services experience providing skills in investigating abuse and neglect, interviewing techniques, and similar functions; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Administering the Class

Applicants possessing a law degree from an appropriately accredited institution and one year of experience in an advocacy or hearing officer role, or one year of experience with laws affecting individuals with disabilities, or one year of experience as a practicing attorney are qualified for this classification.