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## Illinois Citizens for Better Care (ICBC):

**ICBC** exists to improve the quality of life and quality of care of long-term care facility residents. We believe nursing home residents have a right to receive good care in a humane, compassionate, and dignified setting.

**ICBC** advocates for government and private action to ensure quality long-term care and the preservation of residents' personal dignity.

**ICBC** brings together facility residents, their families and friends, and concerned professionals to advise, counsel, and educate the public on a wide range of issues related to long-term care.

**ICBC** is the **only** statewide organization devoted exclusively to protecting the legal, health care, and human rights of nursing home residents.

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For more information about how to be part of a family council, contact:

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**icbc**

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## FAMILY COUNCILS

- Support for Families
- Education and Information
- Communication Between Nursing Home Staff and Families
- Discussion and Action on Shared Concerns

For Family and Friends of Nursing Home Residents



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Illinois Citizens for Better Care

## What is a Family Council

1. **Family councils** help families give each other the **support** and **encouragement** they need.
2. **Family councils** are a forum for **education** and **information** about residents' rights, health care, and nursing home operations.
3. **Family councils** let families organize their **collective concerns** without overwhelming facility staff.
4. **Family councils** build trust between families and staff, developing the **communication** necessary to improve life for all residents.
5. **Family councils** increase resident involvement with their **community**, through sponsored activities.

## Family Councils Have Improved Residents' Lives

- Advocated for new doors in the Alzheimer unit to ensure residents' safety.
- Invited the Director of Nurses to teach families how to help prevent bedsores.
- Cleaned out storage closets after noticing that many of the residents' clothes were missing. As a result, many misplaced garments were found.
- Sponsored staff appreciation and educational programs.
- Worked out billing and delivery issues with the facility's drug distributor.
- Urged the home to assign the same nursing assistants to the same residents, improving resident care and staff job satisfaction.

## The Right to Have a Family Council

Federal law says the family and friends of nursing home residents have the right to hold regular private meetings of an organized group called a "**family council.**" Just as schools have a parents' association, a nursing home **can** and **should** have a family council. Nursing homes in the Medicare and Medicaid programs must:

- provide a meeting space
- cooperate with the council's activities
- respond to the group's concerns.

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