

## **Your Rights in Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs)**

### **What is an Assisted Living Facility (ALF)?**

Assisted living facilities are non-medical residential settings that provide or coordinate personal and health care services, 24-hour supervision, and assistance for the care of four or more adults who are aged, infirm, or disabled. ALFs are licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS).

### **When Living in an ALF, You Have the Right to:**

- contact and meet with advocates from the disAbility Law Center of Virginia;
- be treated with courtesy and respect;
- have privacy in your treatment, activities and conversations except when release of personal information is required by law or regulation;
- take part in planning the medical care and other services you will receive while you live at the facility and you have the right to involve others in helping you plan;
- refuse certain treatments and to choose your pharmacy, mental health, and health care providers without being pressured to have them chosen for you;
- refuse to be a part of any experimental treatment or research;
- know your rights (Virginia Code §63.2-1808) and the facility's rules BEFORE you are admitted;
- manage your personal finances unless a court has appointed someone else to do that for you;
- know IN ADVANCE what services the facility provides and the COSTS for each of those services;
- receive regular statements of your costs and spending from your account;
- be paid for any work you do for the facility and to refuse to do work for the facility. If you do work for a facility, there must be a written statement saying what you will be paid for the work you do.
- have help in planning for discharge or transfer to another facility;

- be part of social, religious, and community groups unless there are documented medical reasons why you should not be a part of that group;
- keep and use your own clothing and belongings unless there are space limitations or the use would violate rights of another resident;
- receive all necessary services to help you develop and attain your maximum abilities and independence;
- be given advance notice before you are involuntarily discharged from a facility, except where an emergency makes it impossible to provide this notice;
- express concerns, file complaints, report actual or suspected misconduct, and otherwise exercise your rights as a citizen and resident without fear of coercion, discrimination, threats or reprisal;
- be treated well and not be abused, neglected or exploited in any way;
- be treated with respect, and not be threatened or treated in a degrading or demeaning way;
- have your staff meet your known needs, such as enough to eat, a clean and safe living space, and proper administration of medication;
- be free from restraints EXCEPT in an emergency to protect you or others from immediate and severe risks of harm; or with a doctor's order, to treat a specific medical condition, so long as the restraints are needed for your safety or the safety of others;
- refuse to take prescription drugs except when they are prescribed by a doctor with your consent.

### **How Do I File A Complaint?**

To file a complaint or for information, you may contact any of the following:

- DSS, Division of Licensing Programs, (800) 543-7545 (toll-free)
- DSS, Adult Protective Services Hotline, (888) 832-3858 (toll-free)
- disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV), (800) 552-3962 (toll-free)

**dLCV publications are available in alternate format, upon request.**