



# The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

September 2026

## You Have a Right to a Safe, Comfortable Living Environment



**To file a  
complaint with  
the LTCO**



**1-877-582-6995**



**[ombudsman@ltco.nj.gov](mailto:ombudsman@ltco.nj.gov)**



**[www.nj.gov/ltco](http://www.nj.gov/ltco)**

A nursing home lawsuit that dates back several years is back in the news, and it provides a valuable reminder about residents' rights. The short story: In 2018, an Atlantic County nursing home resident experienced hypothermia and was rushed to a hospital for emergency care. She died three weeks later.

Family members sued, alleging the facility was negligent because the resident's room was too cold. In 2024, a jury awarded \$450,000 in damages. An appeals court upheld the ruling on July 28.

The office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) believes the ruling goes a long way toward protecting residents by reaffirming the right to a safe, clean, comfortable, and home-like environment.

The wording may sound vague, but that could be the beauty of it. *What does it mean?* Just about everything. Your nursing home should be clean and well maintained. You should have hot water and reliable heating and cooling. If you are in a wheelchair, the nursing home should be barrier free. There are rare exceptions involving very old buildings, but for the most part, nursing homes with multiple floors should have working elevators.

It boils down to this: Nursing homes must provide a safe, comfortable environment where residents can thrive.

Yet the reality is that many nursing homes do not invest enough in maintenance and upkeep of their aging buildings and infrastructure. The LTCO receives numerous complaints about grounded elevators; broken hot water heaters; a lack of running water at all; air conditioning that doesn't stack up to summer; and "automatic" doors that just don't open.

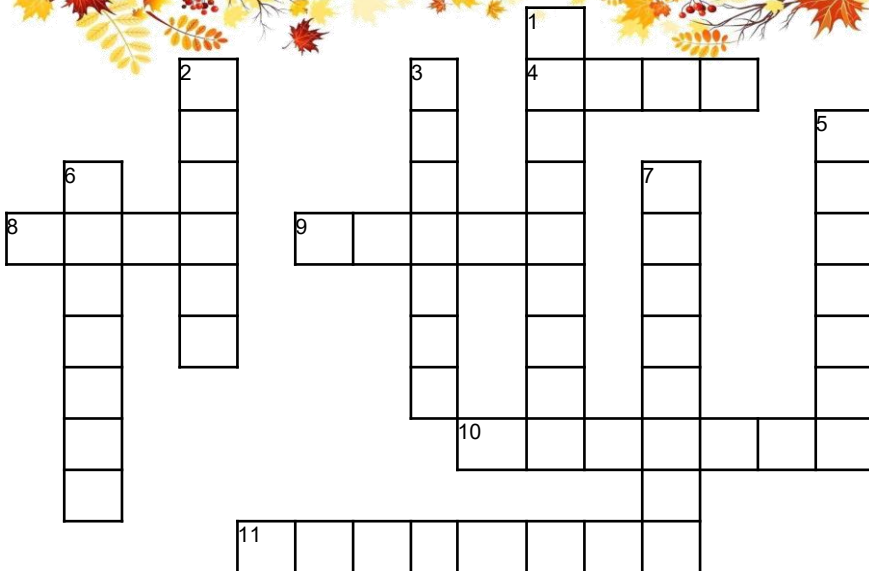
These situations are unacceptable. If they are going on where you live, you should always reach out to the LTCO.

## What's Up With the PNA?

There is no recent news on A2691/S1576, which would raise the PNA from \$50 to \$140 a month.

NJ Nursing Home Residents United will lead efforts to move the bills forward when the state Legislature comes back in session this month. Want to get involved? Call **609-690-4740** or email **community@ltco.nj.gov**.

## Autumn Crossword Puzzle



### Across

4. A tasty yellow vegetable with kernels.
8. Another word for autumn.
9. A crisp, red fruit.
10. Something people wear during the autumn.
11. The way trees look during the autumn.

### Down

1. Used to scare birds away from the corn.
2. One of the colors leaves turn in autumn.
3. A large orange squash that people carve faces into.
5. The middle month of autumn.
6. Another word for gathering crops before winter.
7. A sport that starts in autumn.

Across: 4 CORN, 8 FALL, 9 APPLE, 10 SWEATER, 11 COLORFUL  
Down: 1 SCARECROW, 2 YELLOW, 3 PUMPKIN, 5 OCTOBER, 6 HARVEST, 7 FOOTBALL

## RESIDENT VOICES

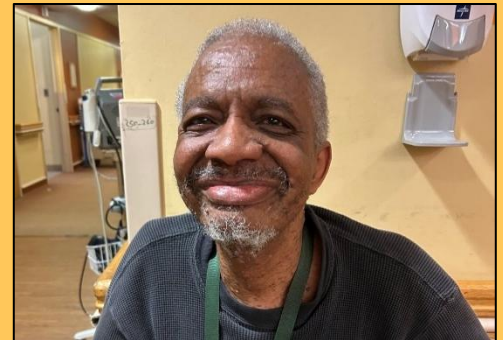
*If you had a superpower, what would it be?*



*If I could have a superhero power, it would be to touch the hearts of anyone who was in pain. Then they would feel good and be kind. And that would make the world a nicer place. - Victor*



*I think it would be really nice to fly. I don't know if that is a superpower, but I would love nothing more than to flap my wings and soar over a field of flowers. - Nancy M.*



*Man, I wish I could fly! – Daryl B.*

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Laurie Facciarossa Brewer, LTC Ombudsman

[www.NJ.GOV/LTCO](http://www.NJ.GOV/LTCO)

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