

Media Release

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October 11, 2017

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Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Investigating Hurricane Surcharge to Residents at Long-Term Care Facilities

~State Ombudsman says surcharge is unacceptable and has launched an investigation~

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) has launched an investigation after receiving complaints that the HarborChase chain of assisted living facilities across the state is charging a special surcharge to all residents in the amount of \$350 following Hurricane Irma.

“We condemn, in the strongest terms, a surcharge placed on residents of facilities,” said State Ombudsman Mike Milliken. “When residents enter an assisted living facility, they sign a contract stating that they will be provided with a set of standard services, including on-site staffing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as well as meals and activities. These services must be provided rain or shine, hurricane or no hurricane. Residents should not be charged for services the facility would otherwise provide.”

LTCOP also notified the Agency for Health Care Administration, the state’s licensing and regulatory agency over long-term care facilities.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program urges any resident of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, or adult family care homes who have questions to call the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program’s toll-free hotline at 1-888-831-0404. Residents can also send their complaints via email to ltcopinformer@elderaffairs.org.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals residing in long-term care settings. Ombudsman volunteers work with residents, family members, administrators, and other parties to resolve complaints or issues brought by or on behalf of long-term care residents. Ombudsmen spend thousands of hours each year working to identify, investigate, and resolve the concerns of residents and their loved ones as well as performing annual assessments of each long-term care facility in Florida. The program consistently empowers residents to know their rights and provides a voice for those who may not be able to speak up for themselves. All services are provided at no charge, and all complaints are confidential.

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