Community/Public Service Worksheet

Service Category: Health and Wellness Programs

Title: Long Term Care Volunteer Ombudsman Program

Primary UA Contact(s):

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Community Partner(s) (If any):

- Kim Johnson (name)

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Program Description:

Long-Term Care Volunteer Ombudsman Program

Law students work with the Ombudsman for the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging to act as volunteer ombudsmen at long-term care facilities in the region. The students undergo training, then make regular visits to their assigned facility to observe conditions, talk with residents, and report any potential problems or issues.

Objectives/Outcomes:

To provide much needed advocacy services for low-income residents of nursing homes in the Tuscaloosa area; to provide law students with experience in the areas of elder law, health care law, and dispute resolution.

Assessment Measures:

Number of students involved in the program; number of facilities served by the program; number of training and volunteer hours reported by students.

Results:

In one semester as a pilot program, and two full academic years as an ongoing service program, twelve (12) law students have participated, serving up to five (5) long-term care facilities each year. The students received a collective thirty-six (36) hours of substantive training, and reported fifty-five (55) hours of volunteer service.

Conclusions:

This program has greatly enhanced the ability of the community partner’s one full-time Ombudsman to ensure that the needs of residents at West Alabama nursing homes are being met.

Improvement Actions:

Continue to recruit more students to the program, including repeat participants from year to year; encourage more thorough reporting of volunteer hours on the part of student participants.