

My name is John Crawford. I am a certified ombudsman in Washington county. I wish to submit the attached statement for consideration.

While Ombudsmen and Guardians might seem to have a natural connection there is, in fact, a potential for conflict. Example: A resident refuses to take his blood thinner medication. The ombudsman might maintain that the Resident has the right to determine for himself while a Guardian has a duty to the well being of the Resident and would insist that the threat of dire consequences demand that he take the medicine.

I realize that the example might not be the best one, as if the Resident already had a Guardian the Ombudsman would not be dealing directly with the Resident, but putting the two in the same chain of command creates the potential for conflict.

One of the duties of the Ombudsman is to help determine if the Resident is in need of a guardian. Should that guardian then be supervised by the Ombudsman? What happens if the Ombudsman and Guardian differ on what is in the best interest of the Resident? Who is the independent third party?

The model of a small group of deputies supervising a large number of volunteers works well for the Ombudsman program where we can operate with a minimum of training and if we make a mistake it probably wont have disastrous consequences. Guardians decisions are often life altering and sometimes irreversable.