59th Medical Wing Protection of Vulnerable Populations: Ombudsman Program

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Overview

The purpose of this program is to provide a mechanism for the prompt and appropriate resolution of complaints or concerns, including allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other forms of mistreatment of patients by authorized personnel, visitors, or contractors at the Medical Wing.

The Ombudsman Program is designed to ensure that patients' rights are respected, and to address any issues that may arise in a timely and effective manner.

How it works

The Ombudsman, working under the guidance of the Commandant, identifies and resolves issues through a variety of means, including direct communication with patients, families, and authorized personnel, and coordinating resources as necessary.

Who is the Ombudsman?

The Ombudsman is an individual designated by the Commandant, and is appointed to serve in this role. The Ombudsman is knowledgeable about the Medical Wing and its operations, and is dedicated to ensuring the protection of vulnerable patients.

How do I contact the Ombudsman?

To contact the Ombudsman, you can call the Ombudsman Hotline at 59 Medical Wing, or contact the Ombudsman directly. The Ombudsman is available to receive complaints and concerns 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Confidentiality

The Ombudsman is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all communications and information received. All communications are held in the strictest confidence, and are not disclosed to any other person or organization without the consent of the complainant.

Contact Information

Ombudsman Hotline: 59 Medical Wing

59 Medical Wing

Ombudsman Program:
Protection of Vulnerable Population
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The 59th Medical Wing (59 MDW) is the first Department of Defense (DoD) and U.S. Air Force (AF) organization to obtain external national accreditation in human research subject protection. In preparation for the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Program’s (AAHRPP) visit, the 59 MDW HRPP harmonized DoD and AF-Specific regulations, DHHS and FDA regulations. The HRPP team developed a novel approach, the Ombudsman Program to implement the DOD requirements that build upon protections provided by the common rule.

The purpose of this poster is to 1) describe DoD vulnerable populations—BMT, students, active duty; 2) Describe ombudsman appointment/training and 3) explain the ombudsman responsibility/role.

The 37th Training Wing, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, is the largest training wing in the United States Air Force. The 37 TRW consists of five training groups and graduates more than 80,000 students annually. These five training groups encompass basic military training of all enlisted recruits entering the Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard; and those attending technical training. This large student population is seen by many in the research community as a prime location to sample a young military population. The 59 MDW HRPP’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) provides centralized administrative, scientific, regulatory oversight and guidance to 59 DoD and non-DoD institutions conducting research and when the research proposes to recruit/consent DoD vulnerable populations such as the aforementioned student population. The IRB makes a determination regarding whether special human protection mechanisms need to be put in place by the primary investigator. The Ombudsman appointment process is one such protection that can be put in place for protecting vulnerable populations.

A focus on protecting our most vulnerable populations is key to being a High Reliability Organization.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not reflect the official views or policy of the Department of Defense or its Components.