



Florida Department of  
Children & Families

**State of Florida**  
**Department of Children and Families**

**Charlie Crist**  
*Governor*

**Robert A. Butterworth**  
*Secretary*

---

**SunCoast Region**

May 9, 2008

Ms. Patricia Benabe  
1600 Haskell, #106  
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Dear Ms. Benabe:

Thank you for your recent correspondence to Governor Charlie Crist regarding your concerns with the guardianship services being provided to your mother and your displeasure with the inability of the Southwest Florida Long Term Care Ombudsman Council to further investigate your concerns. Governor Crist asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

Please understand that the Department of Children and Families cannot intervene in matters involving the Long Term Care Ombudsman program. The ombudsman has been given independent authority to identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, residents of long term care facilities. However, it should be made clear that neither the ombudsman nor the Department is discounting your claims against the guardian, only the means by which you are attempting to have these issues addressed.

As you have been informed by both the Department and the ombudsman, decisions involving the guardianship of your mother are made by the court, and the issues you have with her guardianship must be addressed in the judicial system. I encourage you to contact the Sarasota Clerk of the Circuit Court, Probate Department, to ensure that your concerns are heard. Should you feel you need the advice of a lawyer, please contact the Sarasota County Bar Association at (941) 366-6703 or the Florida Bar Lawyers Referral Service at 1-(800) 342-8011.

I hope this information is helpful. Please be assured that the safety and well-being of your mother is our primary concern.

Sincerely,



Nicholas B. Cox  
Regional Director

9393 North Florida Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33612-7236

---

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency