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MADIGAN CALLS ON STATE AGENCIES TO INCREASE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS TO PROTECT NURSING HOME RESIDENTS***Attorney General Urges Alliance to Crack Down on Noncompliant Facilities***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today called on state agencies to step up their efforts immediately to enforce state laws governing nursing homes to protect residents' health and safety. In a letter to the directors of the Illinois State Police, the Department of Public Health, the Department on Aging and the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Madigan urged the agencies to join her office's new "Operation Guardian" initiative to protect Illinois' vulnerable adults living in nursing homes.

"Far too often, nursing home residents are subjected to violence at the hands of other residents and abuse and neglect at the hands of those entrusted to care for them," Madigan said. "It is the state's obligation to address these failings and ensure that nursing homes provide safe and therapeutic environments for their residents. Nursing home residents and their families depend on the state to ensure that vulnerable adults are treated with care, compassion and dignity."

The Attorney General made today's call as part of a recently launched proactive initiative to uncover serious issues at Illinois' nursing homes. Dubbed "Operation Guardian," attorneys and investigators from the Attorney General's Office and local law enforcement officials are working together on multi-disciplinary compliance checks of nursing homes that include unannounced visits to review safety and compliance issues. Madigan said that collaboration across state agencies will provide swifter responses to nursing homes that fail to comply with the law. Madigan urged the other agencies to join her office, noting that by bringing the expertise and authority of multiple state agencies to this operation, along with the participation of local law enforcement, they can review nursing homes, examine the services being provided to residents and quickly assess the need for further investigation of any safety or care issues.

In addition to the compliance checks, Madigan's office also began conducting unannounced warrant sweeps in nursing homes to ensure that dangerous fugitives are not living among vulnerable adults. Nursing home operators who fail to identify fugitives living in their nursing homes are in violation of state law.

In addition to these recent efforts, in 2005 following her work to close Emerald Park Nursing Home, Madigan worked to require background checks and criminal history analyses to identify nursing home residents that might pose a threat to others. The Attorney General also initiated a law, known as the Resident's Right to Know Act, that now requires nursing homes to complete an annual Consumer Choice Information Report about facilities' standard of care, service and security issues to provide better information to residents and their families.

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