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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: FOUR ARRESTS IN CHICAGO AREA NURSING HOME COMPLIANCE SWEEP

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced four arrests were made in a south suburban nursing home after a surprise “Operation Guardian” compliance check.

Investigators arrested four residents of Burnham Healthcare, 14500 S. Manistee Ave. in Burnham, during the compliance check, which is the 28th conducted by Madigan’s office and partnering state agencies since she launched her Operation Guardian initiative in February 2010. Forty-two residents and employees have been arrested in this ongoing effort to ensure nursing home residents are safe.

“Operation Guardian will continue making surprise visits to nursing homes across Illinois to help provide a safe environment,” Attorney General Madigan said. “By checking the criminal pasts of residents and employees, we can better protect the residents of these facilities.”

Based on outstanding and active Cook County arrest warrants Attorney General investigators with assistance from the Burnham Police Department arrested Donna Williams, 48, for disorderly conduct; Aisha Reasonover, 41, for retail theft; Robert Simmons, 55, for possession of marijuana; and Sheri Spencer, 38, for trespassing.

Madigan’s Operation Guardian nursing home compliance checks give state and local agencies the opportunity to review safety and compliance issues. As part of these checks, the Department on Aging’s Long Term Care Ombudsman Program works to ensure residents’ rights are not being violated. The Department of Public Health conducts a compliance review of any identified offenders and any reported incidents in the last six months, and the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation interviews administrators and performs a license check of all professionals employed at the nursing facility.

This initiative grew out of and expands on the Attorney General’s previous work to shut down south suburban Emerald Park Nursing Home when it was found to be housing numerous sex offenders and other felons.

Madigan has also successfully worked to protect nursing home residents by requiring background checks and criminal history analyses for all residents to identify those who might pose a threat to others. In addition, Madigan authored the Resident’s Right to Know Act that requires nursing homes to complete an annual report detailing the facility’s standard of care, service and security issues to provide better information to residents and their families.

-30-

[Return to April 2011 Press Releases](#)

