

[Press Releases](#)

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ATTORNEY GENERAL APPLAUDS HOUSE COMMITTEE PASSAGE OF BILL TO ALLOW VIDEO, AUDIO MONITORING IN NURSING HOMES

Springfield — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded the House Human Services Committee after it passed her proposal to allow nursing home residents and their families to place video or audio monitoring devices in their rooms to help ensure their safety and well-being. House Bill 2462 sponsored by Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago) now heads to the full House for consideration.

"I have heard from many people about concerns for the safety of their loved ones in nursing home facilities," Madigan said. "This measure would allow families to take a critical step to protect the well-being and safety of their relatives."

The initiative stems from complaints Madigan received from families who are concerned for their relatives' care and security. Madigan's proposal would allow residents of nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities or their family members to purchase and install video or audio monitoring devices in their rooms.

"This is an important piece of legislation that will help families make sure their loved ones are safe in nursing homes when they can no longer provide the care needed," said Harris. "I will continue working with my House colleagues to ensure this bill's strong passage, and I thank Attorney General Lisa Madigan for leading this effort."

Madigan cited an increasing need for additional safety measures at Illinois nursing homes as the state's population continues to age. Currently, Illinois has over 1,200 nursing home facilities with over 100,000 residents. The U.S. Census Bureau also estimates that by 2030, 22.3 percent of Illinois' population will be aged 60 and older, an increase of more than 28 percent from 2012.

Madigan noted that video and audio surveillance could be used as an added tool to help resolve disputes about suspected abuse or negligence. The Illinois Department of Public Health receives more than 21,000 calls annually and responds to approximately 5,000 complaints. During the last quarter of 2014, the Department of Public Health reported 77 licensure violations at 56 facilities.

The main provisions of Madigan's proposal would:

- Allow for audio and video electronic monitoring devices;
- Require resident and roommate consent;
- Make nursing home residents or their representatives responsible for the purchase, installation and maintenance expenses of the devices;
- Prohibit facility retaliation for the use of the devices;
- Provide for recordings to be admissible into evidence in administrative, civil and criminal proceedings; and
- Provide misdemeanor and felony penalties for any person or entity that intentionally hampers, obstructs, tampers with, or destroys a recording or an electronic monitoring device.

If enacted, Illinois would become the fourth state to explicitly allow electronic monitoring devices to be installed in resident rooms in nursing home facilities.

-30-

[Return to March 2015 Press Releases](#)

