



Governor Pat Quinn  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 5, 2010

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## Gov. Quinn Proclaims Oct 3-9 Residents Rights Week in Illinois

### *Weeklong observance calls attention to the rights of residents in Long-Term Care*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Governor Pat Quinn has proclaimed this week as *Residents Rights Week* in Illinois to call attention to the quality of life for residents in long-term care. (See the full proclamation following this release.) *Residents' Rights Week*, observed during the first full week in October, was started in 1981 by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly National Citizen's Coalition for Nursing Home Reform) to highlight the importance of resident focused care.

Governor Quinn called attention to the rights of more than 100,000 long term care residents, in Illinois, when he formed the Nursing Home Safety Task Force to examine state procedures and industry practices. As a result, the Governor signed Senate Bill 326 (Public Act 096-1372) into law to remake the system of admission into nursing homes to prevent residents with violent criminal histories from being placed with vulnerable, older adults.

“We must continue to do everything we can to make sure older adults get the best care and treatment possible in safe, high-quality facilities,” said Governor Quinn. “It’s so important that we take care of our most vulnerable residents and help keep them safe.”

This year’s *Residents Rights Week* theme “Defining Dining...It’s About Me” challenges for thinking of creative ways to implement an exceptional dining experience for our long-term care residents. Residents of long-term care facilities should have the ability to voice their opinions and be heard whether choosing what and when they eat, or making their choices known regarding other issues.

While the Illinois Department of Public Health regulates, inspects and handles licensing of these facilities, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) provides safeguards through the Ombudsman Program. Ombudsmen serve as advocates by protecting and defending residents in long term care facilities, supportive living facilities, and assisted living and shared housing establishments. Ombudsmen inform residents and their families of their rights; resolve any complaints or issues; provide information on resident’s needs and concerns to their families, facility staff and their community; and advocate for good individualized care.

“The Department’s mission is to help older adults live independently and remain in their homes and communities, but we also work to educate families about long-term care by providing critical information to help families find the appropriate facility, if needed, for their aging loved ones,” said Illinois Department on Aging Director Charles D. Johnson.

In collaboration with the Illinois Attorney General’s office and long-term care professional associations and advocacy organizations, IDoA helped create the *Consumer Choice Information Report*. Per state law, long-term care facilities are now required to complete the *Consumer Choice Information Report* questionnaire each year. Log on to the IDoA website at [www.state.il.us/aging/ccir/index.htm](http://www.state.il.us/aging/ccir/index.htm) to find out more about the *Consumer Choice Information Report*.

For more information about programs and services to help older adults and their families, contact Illinois Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

The text of the Governor's proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, in the State of Illinois there are more than 100,000 residents who reside in long-term care facilities, including nursing homes and assisted-living facilities; and,

WHEREAS, the federal Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987 guarantees these residents their individual rights in order to promote and maintain their dignity and autonomy; and,

WHEREAS, in Illinois we formed **Nursing Home Safety Task Force** to respond to concerns for the safety of nursing home residents by thoroughly examining current regulatory policies and coordination among state agencies, and identifying necessary changes in legislation, regulation and policy; and,

WHEREAS, the **Nursing Home Safety Task Force** was charged with examining state procedures and industry practices in order to ensure all Illinois nursing home residents are safe and receive the treatment appropriate for their condition; and,

WHEREAS, the task force held public meetings, heard testimony from advocates, academic experts, nursing home residents and their families, and gathered hundreds of public comments; and,

WHEREAS, in July of this year, the efforts of the task force culminated in the signing of historic legislation that transforms Illinois' system of care for frail older adults and persons with disabilities; and,

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 326 (Public Act 096-1372) is a landmark new law that remakes the system of admission to nursing homes, ensuring that only those in need of 24-hour skilled care are admitted. The law also strengthens the screening process to prevent residents with violent criminal histories from being placed with vulnerable, older adults; and,

WHEREAS, the law sets higher nursing home quality and staffing requirements, raises penalties for violations, and increases inspections and monitoring. The new law also requires nursing homes to help all residents achieve their highest level of functioning and prepare to transition to more independent, community-based living; and,

WHEREAS, all long-term care residents should be aware of their rights so they may be empowered to live with dignity and self-determination; and,

WHEREAS, we wish to honor and celebrate these citizens, to recognize their rich individuality, and reaffirm their rights as community members and citizens, including the right to have a say in their care; and,

WHEREAS, National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week, which is celebrated each year during the first full week in October, was started by the National Citizen's Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR) to highlight the importance of resident focused care; and,

WHEREAS, this year, during the week of October 3-9, individuals and groups across the country will celebrate Residents' Rights Week to emphasize the importance of affirming these rights through facility practices, public policy and resident-centered decision-making that impacts quality of care and quality of life:

THEREFORE, I, Pat Quinn, Governor of the State of Illinois do hereby proclaim October 3 – 9, 2010 as **LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS' RIGHTS WEEK**, in Illinois.

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