



JB Pritzker, Governor
Mary Killough, Director

One Natural Resources Way, Suite 100, Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
Phone: 800-252-8966 • 711 (TRS) • Fax 217-785-4477

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CONTACT:

Iris.Huber@Illinois.gov

New Law Expands Optional Use of Cameras in Long-Term Care Facilities

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Gov. JB Pritzker has signed a measure allowing residents of assisted living and shared housing establishments to exercise the right to use electronic monitoring, meant to enhance transparency and resident safety. A similar law allowing cameras in residents' rooms in nursing homes has existed in Illinois since 2016.

"This new law allows assisted living residents to install a video and/or audio recording device in their room, allowing added peace of mind for them and their family members," **said Illinois State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Kelly Richards**. "Some residents may feel more comfortable knowing loved ones have eyes on them and can watch out for changes in their health, mobility, or routine."

"As people age and their living situations change, we need to make sure they have the opportunity to feel safe and secure no matter what the setting," **said House Assistant Majority Leader Ann Williams (D-Chicago)**. "And there's another benefit – staying in touch via video can allow people feel closer and more connected to each other. If the resident chooses, they can keep their family engaged in their daily lives even if they are unable to be there in person. For family, it can provide a level of comfort and reassurance that their loved one is safe and well."

"People in assisted living and shared housing deserve safety, dignity and the ability to make informed choices about their own care," **said state Senator Graciela Guzmán (D-Chicago)**. "When someone's daily care is placed in the hands of others, residents and their families deserve peace of mind. This law gives residents another tool to protect themselves, document concerns and help ensure these facilities are free from abuse and neglect."

Under current state law, any nursing home resident is allowed to install an electronic monitoring device in their room at their own expense as long as the roommate consents to having the device in the room. Consent can be revoked at any time.

The newly signed House Bill 4517 extends these same electronic monitoring protections to more than 28,600 residents of assisted living and shared housing communities. The camera must be installed in a visible location, and any room containing a camera or audio recording device must be marked with a sign outside the door stating that it's being electronically monitored.

"Cameras are completely optional and not intended for use by facility staff," **added Richards**. "Under this law, they simply provide an added measure of oversight and protection for residents who prefer that."

House Bill 4517 passed the legislature without opposition and was signed into law by Gov. Pritzker on June 26.

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