



WHCA/WiCAL

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‘Strengthening Our Nursing Homes Act’ Passes Senate

SB-212 Would Focus Enforcement on Quality, Bill up in Assembly on Tuesday

MADISON – The Wisconsin Health Care Association and The Wisconsin Center for Assisted Living (WHCA/WiCAL) applauded members of the Wisconsin State Senate who voted Thursday afternoon to pass Senate Bill 212 by a broad bipartisan vote of 24 to 7.

[Senate Bill 212](#) is legislation designed to eliminate the practice of penalizing nursing facilities for the same incident both under state and federal regulations. This practice causes a significant and undue burden on facilities that takes away resources from providing quality care.

“WHCA/WiCAL and its membership would like to thank the 24 Wisconsin State Senators who voted to emphasize quality improvement over duplicative penalization in the skilled nursing facility survey process,” said Tom Moore, WHCA’s executive director. “The current survey process is punitive and duplicative, and takes financial and human resources away from providing quality care to residents of Wisconsin nursing facilities. We believe that the survey process should be about improving the quality of care for our residents, and that’s what this bill aims to accomplish.”

In particular, Moore thanked Senator Pam Galloway (R-Wausau), a practicing physician who authored the legislation. During her remarks, Galloway emphasized that SB-212 does not eliminate any regulation or quality expectation currently in place. It simply eliminates the double penalty for the same situation. The bill now moves on to the Wisconsin State Assembly for consideration. A vote on the bill is expected to be held on Tuesday next week in the Assembly. If passed, this bipartisan-supported legislation would give DHS the authority to use both federal and state violations with their various enforcement tools.

WHCA/WiCAL has been working with the Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (WAHSA), as well as officials from the Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Board on Aging and Long-Term Care (BOALTC) to develop this legislation. The American Association of Retired Persons, Wisconsin Counties Association, and the Wisconsin Hospital Association all registered in favor of the legislation.

“For several years, DHS has operated a committee that is responsible for distributing funds that are returned to the state,” said Moore, emphasizing a quality improvement initiative contained in the bill. “There are specific restrictions on how the federal government permits these funds to be used. Specifically, they must be used for quality improvement in nursing homes. This bill puts into statute the obligation that such efforts would continue.”

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