

Apr-09-07 Governor Signs Legislation on Adult Long Term Care Facilities, Alzheimer's Awareness Day

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GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION ON ADULT LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES, ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS DAY

TRENTON – Governor Jon S. Corzine today signed legislation requiring the Department of Health and Senior Services' website to provide more detailed information on the ownership of long-term care and adult day health services facilities.

"Families deserve peace of mind when they make decisions about long-term and adult day care, and for that they need access to key information," Governor Corzine said. "This important legislation will enable families to make informed choices about the care their loved ones receive."

Members of the public will be able to search the website using the name of a particular facility or the owner's name. The bill also delineates the minimum information to be included on the website:

- the name of the owner of a facility as listed on the facility's license;
- the name of each person who holds at least a 10% interest in the facility, if there is more than one owner or if the owner is a corporation;
- the name of any other licensed long-term care facility in the state owned by the same owner, corporation and each person who holds at least a 10% interest in the facility; and,
- the address and contact information of the facility.

"It's important for New Jersey residents to know what facilities may not be up to standard, and it's even more important for residents to have the opportunity to report violations," said Senator Rice (D-Essex), who sponsored the bill in the Senate. "This law will make it easier for our citizens to know about their long-

term or adult day care facility and to make sure that these facilities are providing proper care.”

The legislation also requires DHSS to post information regarding legal or regulatory violations at facilities and to provide web-links to the New Jersey Report Card for Nursing Homes, maintained by the DHSS, as well as the Medicare Nursing Home Compare database, maintained by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

“New Jersey families need information about assisted living facilities' ownership so they can make well-informed decisions about long-term care for loved ones,” said Assemblyman Herb Conaway, M.D. (D-Burlington), an Assembly sponsor. “Choosing a nursing home, assisted living facility or long-term care facility is stressful enough, but a lack of quality information only makes the decision process that much more overwhelming. This law will help families get factual information about the operators of these facilities so they can rest assured that their loved ones are safe and sound in a reputable care facility.”

The bill (S-942/A-2029) was sponsored in the Senate by Senators Singer (R-Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean) and Rice (D-Essex). It was sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblypersons Dancer (R-Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean), Conaway (D-Burlington, Camden), Gordon (D-Bergen), Vas (D-Middlesex) and Vainieri Huttie (D-Bergen).

The Governor also signed legislation designating the first Monday in November as Alzheimer’s Awareness day.

“Alzheimer’s has a devastating impact on hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans and their families and we must do all we can to raise awareness and push for a cure.” Governor Corzine said.

Alzheimer’s disease is a degenerative neurological disease that causes a loss of cognitive ability. Early symptoms of impaired memory are followed by a decline in other intellectual functions. It is estimated that 350,000 individuals and families in New Jersey are impacted by Alzheimer’s disease.

"This legislation is about increasing awareness of Alzheimer's disease, and the affects it has on patients and their families," said Senator Madden (D-Camden, Gloucester), who sponsored the bill in the Senate. "Scientists say that there are more than 5 million people in the United States who are living with Alzheimer's. As our 'baby-boomer' generation continues to age, the cases of Alzheimer's and other age-related diseases will only increase, and it is important that we are aware of the warning signs so that the disease can be caught early and so that patients can receive the best possible medical treatment."

"The designation of November 3 as Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Day will help ensure that more New Jersey residents know about this serious brain disorder and the challenges it poses for medical providers and families," said Assemblyman Joseph Vas (D-Middlesex), an Assembly sponsor. "This law will provide another tool for assembling resources to combat this debilitating disease and help Alzheimer's patients, their loved ones and caregivers."

The Alzheimer's Awareness Day legislation (S-2195) was sponsored in the Senate by Senator Buono (D-Middlesex). It was sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblypersons Vas (D-Middlesex), Roberts (D-Camden), Conaway (D-Burlington, Camden) and Vainieri Huttel (D-Bergen).