

# Gov. Pritzker Signs Package Of Legislation To Further Protect Older Illinoisans

August 17 2021 8:52 AM



PRINGFIELD — Joined by legislators, advocates, and the Illinois Department of Aging (IDoA) on Senior Day at the Illinois State Fair, Governor JB Pritzker today signed legislation that reflects the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. The four pieces of bipartisan legislation, Senate Bill 677, House Bill 848, House Bill 2570, and House Bill 3147 expand equitable access to healthcare for Illinois' aging population.

The legislation also makes Illinois the first nation to require regular Alzheimer's Disease training for all licensed healthcare professionals serving adults.

"I am excited to sign four pieces of legislation that will make Illinois an even safer state for seniors," said Governor JB Pritzker. "I'd like to thank IDoA for hosting a spectacular Senior Day at the fair, the elected officials in attendance for spearheading these important bills, and to all the care providers who support our seniors every day. Together, the steps we're taking today mark a bipartisan commitment to ensuring that Illinois seniors can live their best lives."

"The past year has been challenging for all of us, but especially for older adults," said Paula Basta, Director of the Illinois Department of Aging. "So, this legislation reflects the administration's continued commitment to providing critical services to older Illinoisans above the age of 60. I would like to thank Governor Pritzker for his leadership throughout the pandemic. And I would also like to thank the Alzheimer's Association, stakeholders, and our legislators for their work to expand Alzheimer's care, support, awareness and education. This package of legislation is about respecting yesterday, supporting today, and planning for tomorrow."

## **Senate Bill 677**

Individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias deserve to receive an accurate diagnosis to be able to plan for the future; however, the disease is too often under diagnosed. As part of the administration's ongoing efforts to combat Alzheimer's, SB 677 requires licensed health care professionals, who have direct patient interaction with adults age 26 and older, to complete at least a one-hour course in diagnosis, treatment, and care on Alzheimer's and other dementias. The curriculum will include content on how to identify and diagnose Alzheimer's, effective communication strategies, and management and care planning.

To accurately and effectively provide care and guidance to individuals living with Alzheimer's, the legislation better equips healthcare professionals, including those serving residents in historically underserved communities, with the tools they need to continue their medical education. This legislation advances Illinois' national leadership in expanding Alzheimer's awareness.

"These bills reflect our commitment to ensuring our seniors get the best resources and care the state has to offer," said Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton. "I'm especially proud of the groundbreaking SB 677 which makes Illinois the first state in the nation to require Alzheimer's diagnosis training for healthcare professionals. I know from

personal experience this will improve the lives of people living with Alzheimer's and their loved ones."

"Diagnosing Alzheimer's early is essential for receiving the best treatment possible," said State Senator Ram Villivalam (D-Chicago). "This new law will better enable healthcare professionals to identify and recommend resources for patients showing signs of dementia."

"230,000 Illinois residents are living with Alzheimer's disease," said State Representative Kathleen Willis (D-Northlake). "Early detection is key to treatment. By working with all healthcare professionals on increasing their training for early screening we hope to see better outcomes for families impacted by this disease. I am extremely proud to have worked with the Lt. Governor and the Alzheimer's Association to pass SB 677."

SB 677 is effective January 1, 2023.

## **House Bill 848**

HB 848 extends the Alzheimer's scratch-off ticket from January 1, 2022 to January 1, 2025. Amending the Illinois Lottery Law will continue the sale of the special instant scratch-off game to benefit Alzheimer's care, support, education, and awareness in Illinois by three additional years.

"To ensure that no one is left without the medical care that they need, it is important that we are providing ample resources to organizations that help those with Alzheimer's," said Assistant Majority Natalie Manley (D-Romeoville). "I would like to thank Gov. Pritzker for signing this legislation and ensuring those suffering from Alzheimer's are able to receive the care they deserve."

"Alzheimer's Disease claims the lives of thousands every year. It's vital that we find ways to support efforts to educate the public and bring awareness to this devastating disease," said State Senator Melinda Bush (D - Grayslake). "I commend the governor for signing this legislation and making awareness a priority."

HB 848 is effective immediately.

## **HB 3147**

The COVID-19 pandemic has been especially difficult for older Illinoisans, who have suffered from the lack of personal connection that is so critical to mental health. HB 3147 addresses this need by requiring long-term care facilities to ensure virtual communication is facilitated among residents and family during a public health emergency.

The legislation adds a new section the Nursing Home Care Act and the Hospital Licensing Act relating to communication methods between doctors and patients during a pandemic. Upon request, long-term care facilities and hospitals must facilitate at least one daily phone or video call between a resident or patient and their family member during a public health emergency.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how being able to virtually connect with loved ones is an important part of many people’s lives,” said Assistant Majority Leader Natalie Manley (D-Romeoville). “Unfortunately, seniors in nursing homes and other facilities haven’t always had the resources necessary to virtually connect with their family and friends, causing many to be isolated. This law ensures that seniors in long-term living facilities will no longer be cut off from communicating with their loved ones during emergencies such as the current pandemic.”

“Social isolation during the pandemic, especially those first few months, was detrimental to the mental well-being of a lot of our long-term care residents,” said State Senator Tom Cullerton (D-Villa Park). “Should the state ever face a disaster like that again, this new law will ensure those residents have a line of contact to their loved ones, whether it be a phone call or a video call.”

HB 3147 is effective immediately.

## **House Bill 2570**

During the pandemic, vulnerable and older Illinoisans benefited from the convenience of eLearning courses. Therefore, SB 2570 ensures that individuals 55 and older who complete an online defensive driving course, compared to an in-person option, may still be eligible for an auto insurance discount.

“The new law opens up access to driver training to more mature drivers in Illinois,” said Deputy Republican Leader Dan Brady (R-Bloomington). “Through eLearning, Illinoisans 55 and older can easily access to the instruction they need to not only stay safe on the roadways but also reduce their vehicle insurance premiums.”

“Safer drivers deserve better deals with their car insurance providers. Insurance policies are set based on risk. Therefore, older adults over the age of 55, who completed at least 8 hours of defensive driving training, overseen by the Secretary of State, deserve to see benefits from improving their skills,” said State Senator Omar Aquino (D-Chicago). “I applaud Governor J.B. Pritzker for supporting responsible drivers.”

HB2570 is effective upon becoming law

This package of legislation builds upon the administration’s commitment to serve and advocating for older Illinoisans. In 2019, Governor Pritzker created the Elder Abuse Task Force to investigate current protective practices and ways to raise public awareness to combat elder abuse. During the pandemic, the administration protected older Illinoisans by expanding meal delivery programs for seniors, increasing funding for the Department on Aging's Community Care Program, and working with grocers to set aside designated shopping hours for vulnerable older residents.