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Fox Valley state legislators introduce bills to improve fall outcomes in assisted living facilities

Many facilities have “no touch” policies that can delay care, lead to further injury or death, and overwhelm local EMS departments

Madison, WI – Today, Senator Kristin Dassler-Alfheim (D-Appleton) and Representative Lori Palmeri (D-Oshkosh) introduced two bills related to fall prevention in residential care facilities, nursing homes, and hospices. Many of these facilities have “no touch” or “no lift” policies that ban staff from assisting patients after a fall, requiring them to call 911 and wait for emergency responders instead.

“Local fire departments, police departments, and other emergency responders are having to respond to hundreds of thousands of “lift assists” each year. Many of these folks aren’t even injured—they just need a hand getting back on their feet. We need to start empowering healthcare workers to safely assist the residents under their care, and that’s what these bills do,” said Senator Dassler-Alfheim.

“There is a very real cost to these “no touch” policies, and patients are bearing the brunt of it. If someone in an assisted living facility needs a lift assist but no transport, Medicaid and Medicare don’t pay for that—the bill goes to the facility and the facility passes it on to the resident. With these legislative proposals, first aid and fall recovery training for professional caregivers and funding for lift devices will provide true assisted living, bring down costs for residents, and improve overall health outcomes,” said Representative Palmeri.

LRB-1002 would require the Department of Health Services to establish a program to award grants to facilities for purchasing patient lifting devices. With this equipment, staff could better assist residents who have fallen and are uninjured instead of having to call EMS.

LRB-1003 initiates the development of fall prevention and recovery training programs for employees working in residential care apartment complexes, community-based residential facilities, adult family homes, and nursing homes. Staff are often untrained in fall prevention and instructed to call EMS, resulting in additional costs every time a resident requires fall assistance. Residents forced to wait for assistance also face greater risk of injury and death. In December 2025, a resident in a Minnesota assisted living facility suffocated to death when staff failed to assist him after he fell off of his electric scooter.

“Falls are not partisan. As we all age, that is something that everyone can relate to. Our caregivers should be trained in every way possible that can help save lives,” concluded Representative Palmeri.