

Reflecting on Larry's Law: Accountability, Dignity, and Emergency Care in Minnesota Assisted Living

Negligence in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living

MANKATO, MN, UNITED STATES, July 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The enactment of Larry's Law represents an important moment for Minnesota's seniors, families, assisted living residents, and care providers. The law emerged from an unthinkable loss, the death of Larry Thompson, a 79-year-old resident of an assisted living facility in Golden Valley, and from the difficult questions that followed.



Assisted Living Negligence

Larry's attorney, Randy Knutson of Knutson + Casey in Mankato Minnesota, states, "Larry's death brought public attention to a basic but essential issue: what should happen when a resident is in immediate distress and needs physical help before emergency responders arrive? For Larry's family, the answer came too late. But their commitment to pursuing accountability helped bring a dangerous gap in resident protection to light and contributed to meaningful statewide reform."

The Case Behind the Reform

Larry Thompson became trapped between his motorized scooter and a wall inside his assisted living facility. He was unable to free himself. According to findings referenced in public reporting and the Minnesota Department of Health's investigation, staff did not physically intervene under a "no lift" or "no touch" policy. Larry died as a result. The entire event was captured on video, as the staff watched him slowly suffocate.

The circumstances of his death were devastating, but they also exposed the real-world consequences of policies that can prevent staff from providing immediate physical assistance to a vulnerable resident in an emergency.

The wrongful death claim brought on behalf of Larry's heirs was resolved confidentially before trial by attorney Knutson. Yet the case's impact extends beyond its individual resolution. It helped focus public, legislative, and regulatory attention on whether assisted living facilities had adequate plans, and adequate authority, for responding when a resident's safety is at immediate risk.

What Larry's Law Changes

On May 18, 2026, Governor Tim Walz signed Larry's Law, bipartisan legislation requiring Minnesota assisted living facilities to establish plans for staff to promptly attend to a resident's needs during a medical emergency until emergency personnel arrive.

At its core, the law recognizes a straightforward principle: emergency procedures must protect residents, not leave them without meaningful help during a crisis.

Larry's Law is widely understood as addressing the harmful effects of "no lift" policies that had, in some circumstances, been interpreted to prohibit staff from physically assisting residents who were injured, trapped, or otherwise unable to move safely. While employee safety and proper training remain essential, the law makes clear that facilities must be prepared for emergencies involving the people entrusted to their care.

Facilities have until August 1, 2027, to implement compliant emergency-response plans.

A Reminder That Policies Must Serve People

Policies are necessary in any care setting. They can promote consistency, protect employees, and establish clear procedures. But policies should never become a substitute for human judgment, urgency, or compassion when a resident is in danger.

Larry's Law invites care providers to examine emergency protocols not merely as documents to be maintained, but as commitments to be carried out when residents need help most. A plan is only meaningful if staff understand it, are trained to use it, and have the support to act decisively in an emergency.

For families, the law also reinforces the importance of asking direct questions when evaluating or monitoring an assisted living facility:

- What happens if a resident falls, becomes trapped, or cannot move independently?
- When may staff physically assist a resident?
- How are employees trained to respond before paramedics arrive?
- Is there sufficient staffing and equipment to handle emergencies safely?
- How does the facility communicate with family members following an incident?

Larry's Legacy

No legislation can undo Larry Thompson's death or erase the grief his family has endured. But Larry's Law can help prevent future tragedies by requiring facilities to prepare for emergencies

with resident safety at the center.

The reform is a testament to the Thompson family's courage and persistence. Their willingness to seek answers and accountability helped elevate an issue that might otherwise have remained unseen. Their loss has now helped create stronger protections for Minnesota's assisted living residents.

Larry's Law should be remembered not only as a statutory change, but as a call to action: vulnerable adults deserve dignity, attentiveness, and meaningful care—especially in the moments when they cannot protect themselves.

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