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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 20, 2019

TO: All House Members

FROM: State Representative Austin Davis

SUBJECT: Collaborating to Improve Patient Safety in Nursing Homes

When we make the decision that the care that either a loved one or ourselves is beyond that which can be delivered at home, we want to know that there is someone looking to ensure that when something does go wrong, it is corrected and not repeated, and that quality continues to grow rather than falter.

Right here in Pennsylvania, we have one of the most innovative and advanced patient safety networks in the country. Tasked with taking steps to eliminate medical errors by identifying problems and recommending solutions, the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority (PSA) was one of the first organizations of its kind nationally and continues to be a national leader on tracking incidents and helping medical facilities become safer for their patients.

However, one area where the Patient Safety Authority itself can improve is to include Nursing Homes in its reporting requirements. Currently, hospitals, abortion facilities, ambulatory surgical facilities and birth centers must all comply with these requirements. My legislation will add nursing homes to this group so that we can track incidents, analyze data, and ultimately correct the problems that led up to incidents and serious events to prevent them from happening again.

By adding nursing homes they will be required to report "incidents," or events where a patient could have been injured but was not, or "serious events" where an event results in patient injury or death. These events must be reported within a specified amount of time, and nursing homes will be required to work with third parties on plans of correction, which the PSA can approve or reject. It also provides whistleblower protections for employees.

This will also give the PSA, the legislature and the Department of Health a much clearer picture of where individual nursing homes, and nursing homes in general can improve, and that is something that we can all agree is good for Pennsylvanians everywhere. So I ask you to please join me in co-sponsoring this important legislation.