

Sen. Jacque: No Patient Left Alone Act advances with bipartisan support

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MADISON, WI... Our loved ones would never be isolated from their families and friends again under legislation that cleared a State Senate committee today protecting our right to visit those dear to us in hospitals and care facilities.

State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), co-author of the proposal with State Rep. Chuck Wichgers, said research coming out of the pandemic has shown what we have known all along about the damage done to patients and their families by blocking human contact when they need each other most.

“Scientific papers indicate that, despite the availability of virtual visits, restricting in-person visitors during the pandemic negatively impacted patient health in many ways, including more pain and suffering and poor nutrition,” Sen. Jacque said. “But no research can fully measure the sheer emotional cruelty inflicted on families by these restrictions.”

Sen. Jacque said the findings also illustrate how patients suffered loneliness, depression, and anxiety. These same mental health issues also burdened family members unable to be with their loved ones.

“That separation bred uncertainty, causing health care providers to field more questions from families about the condition of their patients,” Sen. Jacque said. “Care providers were faced with the difficult dilemma of having to keep them apart.”

Sen. Jacque said the No Patient Left Alone Act addresses these problems by allowing patients in health care facilities to receive visitors, subject to COVID-19 infections protocols, and to have in-person compassionate care visitation between a

resident and any individual the resident requests to relieve physical or mental distress.

“Compassionate care visitation includes situations such as end-of-life matters, adjusting to changes in environment, making major medical decisions, grief support and others,” Sen. Jacque said. “No patient should have to face these struggles alone.”

Sen. Jacque said the No Patient Left Alone Act permits a health care facility to establish visitation policies to limit or restrict visitation under certain circumstances, directs the Department of Health Services to develop informational material regarding health care facility visitation, and provides that patients may file complaints with appropriate state agencies and licensing boards for violation of the provisions of the bill.

The No Patient Left Alone Act ([Senate Bill 257](#)) passed the Senate Committee on Health earlier this morning On a bi-partisan 5-1 vote. It must next clear the full Senate and Assembly, and be signed by the Governor, to become law.