

# Bed Sore FAQs

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM A NURSING HOME LAWYER

## Are pressure relieving mattresses required to be used in nursing homes?



No. Currently, there is only one state, New Jersey, that has even proposed such legislation. Unlike normal spring-filled mattresses, pressure relieving mattresses have multiple layers of foam padding or alternating air pressure reduce the amount of pressure and friction put on bony parts of the body prone that are prone skin break-down and ultimately development of bedsores (also referred to as: pressure sores, pressure ulcers or decubitus ulcers).

Under the terms of Bill S-1517, nursing home operators would have to switch from regular mattresses to pressure-relief mattresses within three years. Nursing home owners would have one year from the bills enactment to begin phasing in the use of pressure relieving mattresses.

“While pressure redistribution mattresses may cost more up front than the standard spring mattresses, we cannot put a price on the continued health and wellness of our state’s most vulnerable senior citizens,” said bill co-sponsor Sen. Bob Gordon (D-Bergen). “While these new mattresses alone won’t make bed sores an ailment of the past, they will greatly reduce the incidence of bed sores, and make their treatment much easier on the dedicated nursing home staff.”

If this law proves effective in New Jersey, it will be interesting to see if other states, or even Medicare, passes similar legislation.