

**Senator Lynne Walz**

**District 15**

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**For Immediate Release**

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**“State Senator Lynne Walz Calls for Investigative Committee”**

On Tuesday, November 21st, State Senator, Lynne Walz called for an Investigative Committee to examine the conditions and practices of State licensed facilities that continue to operate with a history of continuing and repeated violations. Her request stems from the death of a veteran that died on September 3rd at Life Quest in Palmer, Nebraska. The deceased resident, who suffered from multiple health problems, including mental illness, developed uncontrolled vomiting and diarrhea during the last three days before her death.

The Department of Health and Human Services completed an inspection and issued an eighty page report over a month prior to the woman’s death. However, no action was taken to correct the violations or shut down the center until October 5th. Life Quest was shut down officially on October 20th, after no appeal was filed.

“I feel like this is a death that could have and should have been prevented,” said Walz. “These violations posed an immediate danger to the residents of Life Quest. Yet, there was no action until a tragedy happens. We need to take care of our most vulnerable citizens. I plan to introduce a legislative resolution to create an investigative committee to not only look at this case, but to examine why our State continues to rely on assisted living facilities and mental health centers that segregate, congregate, and unfortunately warehouse people with mental illness. Instead, we need to pursue strategies and practices that support best practices in the field. This includes providing supportive housing and the services people need to live as independently as possible in the community”

Over the last four years, three state-licensed facilities have closed their doors because of neglect, abuse, and mismanagement. “This is happening across Nebraska, many of which are last resorts for families in rural and urban areas. This investigation will identify the problems and provide oversight to ensure the department makes the necessary changes and to make certain we are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

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