



**What the Legislature Did**

If you're a political junkie, you know that the Texas Legislature's 81st session ended in June. If you're not a political junkie—now you know! This is important because many of the laws that were passed go into effect September 1.

**Crimes Against Older Adults**

One, HB 2328, increases the level of felony in forgery and identity theft cases if committed against "elderly individuals" (65 years or older). It also increases credit and debit card abuse to a third degree felony if committed against elderly individuals.

**Advance Directives**

HB 2585 has made some significant changes in the execution of certain documents. If you have executed a medical power of attorney, living will or out hospital DNR, you might recall that you had to have two people witness your signature, and that at least one of them could not be related to you or benefit from your Will. Going forward you will have the option to either have the two witnesses, **or** you can have the documents notarized. Even though this change is effective September 1, the Health and Human Services Commission has until December 1 to issue new forms. Until the statutory forms are developed, most attorneys could draw up a form with a place for the notary to sign instead of the witnesses.

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**Did You Know?**

In the 81st Texas Legislature that ended in June:

- 7419 bills were introduced
- 1459 bills were passed
- 35 bills were vetoed

**Medicaid Change**

If a Medicaid applicant gives goods or money away, the penalty period for eligibility is figured by taking the total amount of the gift and dividing by the average cost of nursing home care in the state.



For the last year that average has been \$122.50. Starting September 1 the average cost of nursing home care is now **\$130.88**.