

***2018 Legislative and Regulatory Issues***

***For Maryland Senior Care Providers and Their Residents/Clients***

Advancing the quality of care to Maryland’s seniors and disabled population is the mission of LifeSpan members. To that end, LifeSpan will work to achieve the following objectives:

**ADVOCATE FOR APPROPRIATE MEDICAID FUNDING:** Historically, senior care providers have been underfunded, meaning that Medicaid reimbursement does not cover the cost to care for residents/clients. Any additional budget cuts must be opposed to protect quality care. Rates must cover the cost to provide care.

**OPPOSE LEGISLATION THAT INCREASE OPERATING COSTS WITHOUT FUNDING:** LifeSpan opposes legislation that increase operating costs for senior care providers**.** Unlike other businesses, senior care providers often cannot cost shift to customers either because the client/resident is on Medicaid or is on a fixed-income. Examples of legislation include increases in the State’s minimum wage, especially if no additional Medicaid or other funding is provided.

**ADVOCATE FOR AN EFFICIENT ELIGIBILITY SYSTEM:** LifeSpan continues to work with DHMH and DHR on streamlining eligibility determinations. For nursing facilities, the goal is a 30-day turnaround time for applications. Recent changes include re-emphasizing the “good faith” and “reasonable certainty” standard, implementation of an “Asset Verification System,” development of an online application system (*m*yDHR) and forms. The State must be cognizant of the need to ensure that eligibility offices remain fully staffed and operational and that rules and regulations are strictly and consistently applied by eligibility caseworkers.

**REFORM THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT:** Reasonable regulations that provide quality of care without overburdening providers either fiscally or administratively are needed. LifeSpan will continue to work with the State on regulatory changes, including ensuring that regulations are applied objectively and not subjectively by surveyors. **More importantly, the General Assembly must refrain from imposing additional requirements on senior care providers, especially given funding shortfalls in Medicaid funding**.

**PROMOTE STRONG PARTNERSHIPS UNDER HEALTH CARE REFORM:** Senior care providers must be viewed as an essential component in the implementation of Maryland’s All Payor Contract, especially as the State focuses on Total Cost of Care initiatives. This includes actively participating in essential workgroups, including the newly developed Innovations Workgroup and workgroups focusing on reform of the State’s certificate on need process.

**OPPOSE WEAKENING MEDICAL LIABILITY LAWS:** LifeSpan will oppose increasing “caps” on damages in medical malpractice cases and other provisions that weaken current medical liability laws.