



LifeSpan calls upon Maryland officials to 'Honor the Promise' for its seniors *Adopt Four Key Action Items to Ensure Proper Care*

(Columbia, Md.) — November 27, 2006—LifeSpan President Isabella Firth today announced the beginning of a statewide 'Honor the Promise' campaign to encourage State officials to adopt four key action items that will ensure Maryland delivers proper care to its rapidly-growing senior population.

“It is clear from recent election results that voters want change and are weary of the same-old status-quo when it comes to elected officials living up to the promise of bipartisan performance of their duties,” said Firth. “Our Honor the Promise campaign calls for those taking office in the next legislative session to tackle the problems of providing for the needs of Maryland’s increasingly vulnerable senior population. From the beginning, our system of government has promised to ensure that the needs of its citizens are met. We are simply asking elected officials to honor that promise.”

Firth noted Maryland—like many states—has a spotty record when it comes to senior care. “Our four key action items should not be considered optional items in the state budget,” Firth claimed. “These are what the citizens of Maryland should expect from those who govern in our name.”

Firth explained the Honor the Promise campaign will allow Maryland citizens to endorse and send elected state officials their demand that the following four key action items be adopted:

1. Expedite the process for determining Medicaid eligibility by updating Maryland’s antiquated computer system. Simplify paperwork and reduce penalties.

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2. Improve quality of care by stabilizing funding for all senior care organizations.
Budget cuts threaten quality of care—and providers need adequate compensation.
3. Create workforce incentives to encourage individuals to work in senior care. The lack of qualified staff will have a profound, negative effect on future senior care.
4. Reduce regulatory and administrative burdens placed on senior care providers.
Creative solutions, not draconian regulations, will stimulate innovative care.

Firth said the Honor the Promise campaign will be launched through the facilities of its more than 300 member organizations across Maryland and its grassroots network. Honor the Promise requests will be made available for citizens to endorse by their signature at community centers, nursing and long-term care facilities and other public places throughout the state.

“We will also be asking delegates and other state officials to publicly endorse this campaign,” said Firth. “Our recommendations are neither wish lists nor pie-in-the-sky demands. If adopted, these four key action items can improve senior care and save taxpayers millions of dollars simultaneously. It is what is needed now—and in the future.”

For more information, contact LifeSpan President Isabella Firth at (410) 381-1176, Ext. 226 or ifirth@malifespan.org.

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