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Updates for this past week:

The Maryland RELIEF Act has been signed into law. Here is a link to a YouTube video summarizing the Act - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFG1G6K7co&feature=youtu.be>. In addition, FAQs for businesses and nonprofits can be found on the Comptroller's website. <https://www.marylandtaxes.gov/RELIEFAct/>

The House Health and Government Operations Committee held a hearing on the visitation bills – **House Bill 806: Essential Caregivers** and **House Bill 893: Nursing Homes – COVID – Visitation**. As expected, the hearing was emotional given that both sponsors shared their stories regarding the impact of COVID-19 and the inability to see their mothers who both reside in a nursing home. LifeSpan had opposed House Bill 806 because of its application beyond COVID-19 and the requirements posed on NHs and ALs to develop policies and procedures. However, LifeSpan did support House Bill 893 given that it was limited to COVID-19 and required MDH to develop the guidance for visitation. LifeSpan did inform the committee of the revised visitation order taking effect on March 1st and that the Governor's executive authority would always supersede any bill requirement. The bills will be in subcommittee on Thursday.

House Bill 375: Family and Medical Leave (Time to Care Act) was heard in the House Economic Matters Committee. This bill implements a family and medical leave program in Maryland, like the federal leave program. It is a paid leave program that would be funded by employer and employee contributions. LifeSpan opposed the bill along with the majority of the business community.

With regard to House Bill 375, LifeSpan did send out an alert on **House Bill 1326/Senate Bill 727: Maryland Healthy Working Families Act - Revisions and Public Health Emergency Leave** and **House Bill 581 (Essential Workers Protection Act)**. If you have not yet sent the alert to your legislators, please do so. The committees have stated that House Bill 581 will be sent to a workgroup, but one has yet to be convened. House Bill 1326/Senate Bill 727 will be heard the first week of March.

This week, there will be hearings on **House Bill 836: COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing and Vaccination Act of 2021**. LifeSpan is supporting the bill but only to discuss an amendment to require funding if a testing plan is required for NHs, ALs, and HHAs. A meeting with the sponsors is scheduled for Monday. The House Economic Matters Committee will also be hearing bills on **unemployment insurance** that address ways to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses. Committees will also be hearing bills on SB704: NH – Change of Ownership; SB707: OHCQ – Influenza Virus Immunization Education – AL; and SB579 Health Care Facilities – Restrooms – Requirements.

Bills for discussion this week:

Senate Bill 748/House Bill 1022: Public Health - State Designated Exchange - Clinical Information is a HOLD from last week. Please see the attachment with the email explaining the grant program. Again, this bill requires a nursing home, on request of the Maryland Department of Health, to electronically submit clinical information to the State designated exchange (CRISP). The bill authorizes to provide the information submitted to (i) a health care provider; an authorized health information exchange user; a health information exchange authorized by the MHCC; a federal official; and (v) a State official. An electronic health network may not charge a fee to a health care provider or to CRISP for providing the information.

House Bill 1171: Labor and Employment - Maryland Employee Protection Plan for Vaccine Refusal. Prohibiting an employer from terminating an employee solely on the basis of the employee's refusal to receive a vaccination against COVID-19; specifying that an employee waives the right to file a civil action against the employer if the employee refuses to receive a certain vaccination and the employee contracts COVID-19 in the course of employment; etc.

House Bill 1210: Corporate Diversity – Board, Executive Leadership, and Mission.

This bill applies to a commercial enterprise or business that is in good standing with the SDAT and is incorporated in the State or registered to do business in the State OR is a corporation, foundation, school, hospital, or other legal entity for which none of the net earnings inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual holding an interest in the entity. The bill requires those entities that receive a State benefit (\$1 million per year a tax credit, capital grant fund or a State contract) to demonstrate:

(1) membership of underrepresented communities in the entity's board or executive leadership; or (2) support for underrepresented communities in the entity's mission. The Department of Commerce and the Office of Small, Minority and Women Business Affairs is required to (1) develop, maintain, and post publicly a State equity scorecard that compiles diversity data for each entity on: (i) the membership of underrepresented communities in the entity's board or executive leadership; and (ii) the support of underrepresented communities in the entity's mission. It is unclear if this second requirement applies to all businesses or those that accept a State benefit.

LifeSpan thanks our legislative sponsor for their support and dedication to the senior care industry and to LifeSpan members.



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