



Prepared by **Danna Kauffman**
Schwartz, Metz and Wise, PA
410-294-7759
dkauffman@smwpa.com

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This upcoming week marks the start of the crossover week. Committees are meeting more frequently and there are longer floor sessions. The majority of the health bills, such as visitation, transfer of ownership have passed one or both committees. The main issue that will become our focus will be on the labor and employment bills. There was a 3rd joint workgroup on **House Bill 581: Essential Workers Protection Act**, which includes protections for essential workers (hazard pay; additional leave; coverage of health care costs). This meeting focused on the discussion of the requirement to “evacuate and sanitize a worksite.” Issues raised involved what was meant by a worksite? Did a worksite include the entire worksite, e.g., worker tests positive but only worked on 4th floor of a building – does entire building need to be evacuated and sanitized? How do you evacuate a health care setting (i.e., asked by Delegate Adams)? What does sanitize mean and who determines “properly sanitize?” As expected, there was no resolution to this issue. There was a brief discussion on penalties.

Prior to the workgroup, staff had requested that any suggested amendments be submitted prior to the workgroup. However, these amendments were not discussed. At the end of the workgroup, the Chair of the House Economic Matters Committee and sponsor of the bill said that the individual committees (ECM and FIN) would now need to discuss the bills. The House Economic Matters Committee has referred the bill to subcommittee that will be meeting on Monday at 10:00 AM. This continues to be a work in progress.

Working with other health care organizations, we submitted nine amendments. The main points of the amendments:

- 1) limit the emergency to only a declaration of a catastrophic public health emergency;
- 2) tighten the definition of essential worker to reflect those designated as such by MEMA rather than anyone who cannot work remotely or whose job responsibility must be done on-site;
- 3) require that any requirements for plans or protocols must comply with applicable federal and State health and safety standards to avoid inconsistency and duplication with CDC, OSHA, etc;
- 4) removal of the hazard pay requirement;
- 5) exempt health care settings from the provision allowing an employee to leave work if the employee deems it unsafe;
- 6) remove the requirement that employers pay unreimbursed health care costs;
- 7) raise concerns regarding paid leave – what happens if employer offers more; how would this requirement intersect with federal expansions; would monies be available to compensate employers like the federal program, amount of leave, etc;
- 8) remove the requirement that if an employee gets an infectious disease the worksite has to be evacuated and sanitized; and
- 9) reduce the timeframe for filing a complaint with the Commissioner of Labor.

Similarly, **Senate Bill 727: Maryland Healthy Working Families Act - Revisions and Public Health**

Emergency Leave will be heard this week in Senate Finance along with **Senate Bill 728: Injury and Illness Prevention Program**. LifeSpan opposes both bills, including the provision in Senate Bill 727 regarding the PRN repeal exemption. The workers' compensation bills that create a presumption for COVID-19 have not moved in either committee yet.

While LifeSpan did not take a position on this bill (introduced by the Speaker), **House Bill 1210: Corporate Diversity – Board, Executive Leadership, and Mission** is on third reading in the House. The bill has been amended. This bill requires a business in the State to demonstrate either (1) diversity in its board or executive leadership or (2) support for “underrepresented communities” in its mission in order to qualify for specified State capital grants, tax credits, or contracts worth more than \$1.0 million. The bill requires the Department of Commerce (Commerce) and the Governor’s Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs (GOSBA) to develop a State equity scorecard that compiles diversity data relating to corporate boards, leadership, and missions. Additionally, the bill requires a person that submits an annual report to the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) to submit related diversity data. The amendments qualify that a State contract is awarded through a competitive bidding process and does not include any federal funds.

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



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