



General Assembly Weekly Report
Week ending January February 16, 2024
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General Updates

We have hit that time of Session where most bills have been introduced. Therefore, the activity switches to hearings, workgroups and voting. Below is activity for the week.

LifeSpan continues to work with LeadingAge Maryland on amendments to **Senate Bill 73/House Bill 68**, which is the CCRC bill that requires additional subscribers to be on the board, requires a sequential entrance fee refund process (as opposed to per contract (per unit sold)), and reporting requirements to the Department of Aging for grievances and entrance fee refund returns. Both associations stand firm on not altering the boards or the entrance fee refund policy but are examining additional disclosure and communication policies. Examples include posting the disclosure statement online, requiring quarterly rather than an annual meeting between subscribers and management and requiring letters be sent to subscribers or beneficiaries after a contract is terminated regarding the refund. Another bill has been introduced **House Bill 1177** which contains many of the same provisions but also requires a “bill of rights.” LifeSpan is opposing.

LifeSpan also held a meeting with its LifeSpan members and participated in a legislative workgroup with the House sponsor on **Senate Bill 1000/House Bill 1122: Nursing Home – Acquisitions – Revision**. LifeSpan went through its issues with the bill draft, including the time frame for submitting a request for approval to the Maryland Health Care Commission. The hearings are not until March 7th.

House Bill 39/Senate Bill 197: Residential Service Agencies – Reimbursement – Personal Assistance Services (Homecare Worker Rights Act of 2024), which requires that a residential service agency that participates in the Medicaid program only hire W2 employees rather than 1099, has passed both committees and is being heard on the floor of each chamber.

House Bill 189 has passed the House HGO Committee. As amended, this bill requires residential service agencies to report annually to the Department of Labor the average wage rate as well as low and hire wages for personal care aides. The bill also requires the Department of Health to report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee within 180 days following the release of the final federal Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services Rule on an overview of the final rule and plans or steps that the Department will take in order to operationalize the rule. As part of this report, it will include the process that the Department will take to review wage reports of personal care aides and how this data will be used to review Medicaid reimbursement rates as outlined in the rule. Much of the reporting language is the result of a federal rule that is being considered and has been reported to become final later this spring.

Bills that have hearings this week --

- 2.21 (HGO) - House Bill 723: Office of the Attorney General – Rights of Residents of Health Care Facilities – Injunctive Relief and Penalties (opposed)
- 2.22 (HGO) – House Bill 932: State Board of Long-Term Care Administrators - Requirements for Assisted Living Managers (support – LifeSpan requested)
- Medicaid Budget: At this time, the budget increase remains at 3%. LifeSpan will submit support testimony to maintain the 3% for provider rates.