



TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Guy Guzzone

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer

DATE: February 27, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 449 – *Labor and Employment – Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program*

On behalf of the LifeSpan Network and the Maryland Association of Adult Day Services (MAADS), we **support** Senate Bill 449. Members of the LifeSpan Network and MAADS provide post-acute care services to Maryland's elderly and disabled residents, many of whom are on Medicaid. Services are provided in a variety of settings, including nursing facilities, assisted living, and medical adult day centers. Senate Bill 449 establishes a Direct Care Innovation Program in the Department of Labor whose purpose is to provide matching grants to eligible entities to create and expand on successful recruitment and retention strategies that address the range of potential barriers to increasing the number of direct care workers.

Our workforce is the cornerstone of our operations. However, Maryland is facing a workforce crisis. Maryland's 60+ population is anticipated to increase from 1.2 million to 1.7 million by 2030, a 40% increase. This demographic shift impacts Maryland's post-acute care settings in two ways. First, the increasing senior population increases the need for services, which then increases the need for direct care workers. According to the Maryland Regional Direct Services Collaboration, Maryland will need approximately 40% more direct care workers to meet this increased need for care. Second, the increasing senior population will have a negative effect on the availability of direct care workers given that the primary labor pool for direct care workers are women aged 25-64, whose demographic is growing at less than one percent.

LifeSpan, through its' education affiliate The Beacon Institute, has introduced several programs to bolster the direct care workforce. For example, LifeSpan has partnered with Morgan-Keller Construction, Inc and other organizations to award over \$100,000 in scholarships to qualified senior caregivers in the past decade to further their education in senior care. However, this is only a small fraction of what is needed to grow and sustain a quality workforce to meet the rapidly growing needs of Maryland's aging population.

Senate Bill 449 will enable and encourage organizations to find innovative methods for increasing the number of direct care workers. We appreciate the sponsor's amendment to clarify that a geriatric nursing assistance is a category of worker that would qualify under Senate Bill 449. With this amendment, we urge a favorable vote.

For more information call:

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