



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 504: Baltimore City – Health Care Facilities and Clinics – Reporting of Methicillin–Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus Incidents:

POSITION: **Oppose**

This bill requires, in Baltimore City, a nursing home, assisted living facility, or an outpatient clinic that offers or oversees services relating to dialysis or HIV/AIDS to report to the Commissioner of Health regarding incidents of methicillin–resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). The report must include strategies that are being employed to reduce or eliminate future incidents. On or before December 1, 2010, the Commissioner of Health must: (1) compile any reports received; and (2) report to the Secretary, the Governor, and the General Assembly regarding findings and recommendations made relating to the compilation of reports. On or before December 31, 2010, the Commissioner and the Secretary must brief the General Assembly regarding the findings and recommendations.

LifeSpan Network strongly support working to reduce the rate of infections in nursing facilities and assisted living facilities and take this responsibility very seriously. Over the years, the State and the industry have developed processes to control infectious diseases, including MRSA. After years of review, the Centers for Disease Control issued the guidelines – **Management of Multidrug-Resistant Organisms in Healthcare Settings**, October 2006. These guidelines include MRSA, vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) and certain gram-negative bacilli (GNB).

Maryland took it one-step further and implemented regulations in 2004 requiring each nursing facility to establish, maintain, and implement an effective infection control program. These regulations also incorporate the CDC guidelines. The regulations require a nursing facility to:

- Investigate, control, and prevent infections in a timely manner through a system that enables the facility to:
 - Analyze patterns of infected individuals;
 - Analyze changes in prevalent organisms;
 - Analyze increases in the rate of infection; and
 - Obtain surveillance data for the prevention and control of additional cases.

- Determine the procedures, such as appropriate precautions, that are to be applied to an individual resident;
- Maintain a record of infections in the facility and the corrective actions that were taken related to infections; and
- Monitor and evaluate the effective of the program by surveying rates of infection and effective implementation of the policies and procedures required by the program.

Each facility must have at least one individual responsible for this task who must attend an infection control training program approved by the Office of Health Care Quality and the Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control Program. LifeSpan, through its education affiliate The Beacon Institute, partnered with the Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control and offers this three-day course throughout the year for nursing facility staff. Again, while LifeSpan appreciates the attention given to this important issue, the State has already taken the appropriate measures to protect the health and safety of residents and staff in long-term care facilities.

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LifeSpan Network is a senior care provider association representing approximately 300 providers, including nursing homes, assisted living facilities, medical adult day care providers, continuing care retirement communities and senior housing communities. Our members provide care to approximately 45,000 seniors.

Submitted by:

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