



Legislative Endorsement

Bill No. and Title: S404 H756 An Act to Strengthen Emergency Preparedness for Home Care Workers

Sponsor(s) and Committee: Sen. Friedman, Rep. Santiago, Elder Affairs

Legislative History: Hearing: September 21st, 2021

Legislation Text: SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the executive office of health and human services, in consultation with the department of elder affairs and the office of Medicaid, shall develop metrics, standards, and procedures that trigger emergency long-term care provider rates of payment that include hazard pay wage add-ons for employees of home health agencies and home care agencies that shall be implemented in response to any COVID-19 resurgence, statewide public health emergency, severe statewide weather emergency, or other statewide emergency incident. The executive office of health and human services shall also develop standard, comprehensive, timely and publicly accessible processes for provider reporting and state audits of the use of emergency rate increases for wage increases.

SECTION 2. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the executive office of health and human services, in consultation with all appropriate state agencies and all relevant public stakeholders, shall develop and implement a mandatory infection control and public health training program that all new and incumbent direct care employees of home health agencies and home care agencies shall complete as a condition of employment. The executive office shall establish contracts with labor-management training funds, community colleges, and other entities capable of conducting the training program and shall ensure the training program is implemented in a manner that is coordinated with the work of other state agencies and public and private entities involved in health care workforce training, recruitment, and retention.

SECTION 3. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the executive office of health and human services shall establish an online personal protective equipment exchange for the purpose of identifying, aggregating, and making available for private purchase and procurement necessary personal protective equipment to be utilized by long-term care workers, including, but not limited to, personal care attendants and all employees of nursing facilities, resident care facilities, assisted living residences, adult day programs, home health agencies, and home care agencies in the Commonwealth. The executive office shall: (i) identify and offer qualified private wholesalers, manufacturers, and suppliers the opportunity to participate on the exchange; (ii) ensure that the personal protective equipment offered on the exchange complies with all federal and state requirements and specifications; and (iii) establish and implement a 2 comprehensive process to receive, negotiate, and finalize competitive pricing to be offered for the personal protective equipment placed on the exchange.

All sales of the personal protective equipment from the exchange shall be private transactions by and between the private purchaser and private seller. The executive office shall operate the exchange and therefore facilitate such transactions but shall have no legal responsibility to offer payment for or the delivery of the personal protective equipment. The executive office may establish processes to subsidize or to discount the cost of personal protective equipment that is purchased through the exchange for certain purchasers.

In developing the exchange, the executive office shall establish a stakeholder group, which shall be comprised of representatives from 1199SEIU, the Massachusetts Senior Care Association, the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts, manufacturers and suppliers of personal protective equipment, and other stakeholders that the executive office deem necessary to organize and establish the exchange.

SECTION 4. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the executive office of health and human services, in consultation with the department of elder affairs and the office of Medicaid, shall develop and implement new standards and practices that use the worker contact information included in the Massachusetts Home Care Worker Registry established in Chapter 139 of the Acts of 2017 to ensure robust communication with the home care agency workforce during a state public health emergency or other state emergencies. Such communication shall include, but not be limited to, informing the home care agency workforce about any new provider rates designated for hazard pay, the availability of and standards for mandatory infection control trainings, and procedures for accessing personal protective equipment from any state-run online exchange.

SECTION 5. The personal protective equipment exchange established in Section 3 shall be implemented not later than 90 days after the effective date of this act.

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S404>

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Endorsed by 32 members of Dignity Alliance Massachusetts including:		
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