

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024, titled "**An Act to improve quality and oversight of long-term care**," is a comprehensive law signed by Governor Healey on September 6, 2024, . It focuses on enhancing the quality and oversight of long-term care services in the Commonwealth.

Key provisions of the Act include:

- **Establishing Task Forces:** It created several task forces to examine different aspects of long-term care, including the **Viability and Sustainability of Long-Term Care Facilities Task Force** (mandated to report by July 31, 2025) and the **Rest Home Task Force** (which reported on April 1, 2025).
- **Improving Nursing Home Oversight:** The Act requires annual inspections of nursing homes, increased financial penalties for violations, and enhanced transparency regarding ownership and management. It also mandates that long-term care facilities develop and submit outbreak response plans.
- **MassHealth Estate Recovery Reform:** A significant component of the law limits MassHealth estate recovery to the minimum required by federal law, protecting the estates of many individuals with disabilities and seniors who receive long-term care services.
- **Expanding Assisted Living Services:** The Act codifies the ability of Assisted Living Residences to provide basic health services, such as injections and wound care, by qualified staff once certified to do so.
- **Support for the Long-Term Care Workforce:** It establishes a fund to recruit and retain long-term care workers, offering grants for CNA and LPN training and leadership development.
- **Addressing Discharge Delays and Transitions:** The Act includes provisions aimed at mitigating hospital discharge delays, such as requiring faster prior authorization for post-acute care and mandating a uniform prior authorization form. It also directs studies on the feasibility of professional guardians for indigent persons and the cost-effectiveness of changes to Medicaid long-term care eligibility.
- **Anti-discrimination Protections:** The Act requires staff training on the rights and care of LGBTQ+ older adults and individuals living with HIV, and prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status.
- **Small House Nursing Homes:** The law mandates the Department of Public Health to create regulations for "small house nursing homes," a model designed to be more homelike and for no more than 14 residents.

In essence, Chapter 197 is a comprehensive measure to improve the quality, oversight, and accessibility of long-term care in Massachusetts, while also addressing issues related to affordability and resident rights.