

(6) three representatives of area agencies on aging, appointed by the Secretary of Aging.

(c) The Secretary of Aging shall chair the Task Force.

(d) The Task Force shall study the quality of care in Maryland nursing facilities, including:

(1) current quality of care standards for nursing facilities;

(2) current staffing patterns and staffing standards;

(3) current policies and procedures for inspecting nursing facilities and responding to quality of care complaints;

(4) the findings of a March 1999 U.S. General Accounting Office report on nursing home complaints to the Special Committee on Aging of the U.S. Congress;

(5) a comparison of the Maryland standards, policies, and procedures to those in other states;

(6) the labor pool available to fill nursing jobs; and

(7) State funding mechanisms for nursing facilities and regulation of nursing facilities.

(e) The Task Force shall recommend:

(1) changes to current standards, policies, and procedures necessary to ensure quality of care in nursing facilities;

(2) if necessary, a methodology for determining appropriate levels of staffing and standards; and

(3) if necessary, changes to funding mechanisms.

(f) The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, subject to § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on or before December 1, 1999.

(g) The Department of Aging, with assistance from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Legislative Services, shall provide staff support for the Task Force.

SECTION 4. 6. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 3 5 of this Act shall take effect June 1, 1999. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of May 31, 2000, with no further action required by the General Assembly, Section 3 5 of this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

SECTION 3. 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, subject to Section 4 of this Act, this Act shall take effect October July 1, 1999.

SECTION 7. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Sections 1 and 4 of this Act shall take effect July 1, 1999. Sections 1 and 4 of this Act shall remain effective for