

(b) The Governor shall designate one of the members as chairman of the Task Force.

(c) The Task Force shall:

(1) examine the staffing patterns and standards that currently exist in nursing facilities in Maryland;

(2) conduct a study to determine the appropriate staffing ratios and standards necessary to meet the needs of residents in nursing facilities, including determining appropriate levels of staffing based on resident acuity;

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

(4) report its recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Environmental Matters Committee on or before August 1, 2000.

(d) The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shall provide staff support for the Task Force.

(e) A member of the Task Force:

(1) may not receive compensation; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1999. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 10 months and, at the end of April 30, 2001, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Article - Health - General

15-117.

(a) In this section, "leave of absence" includes:

(1) A visit with friends or relatives; and

(2) A leave to participate in a State approved therapeutic or rehabilitative program.

(b) (1) To ensure that a bed is reserved for a Program recipient who is absent temporarily from a nursing facility, the Program shall include the following payments for nursing facilities that have made a provider agreement with the Department.

(2) If the Program recipient is absent from a nursing facility due to hospitalization for an acute condition, the facility shall receive payment for each day that the Program recipient is hospitalized and a bed is reserved and made available for the return of that Program recipient.

(3) If a Program recipient is on leave of absence from a nursing facility,