

Taylor named to commission

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CUMBERLAND — Casper Taylor Jr., former speaker of the House of Delegates, has been appointed to the Maryland Health Care Commission to help shape and direct the state's health care policy. Taylor was among 235 of "green bag" nominees for state boards and commissions Friday.

"It's the leading prestigious commission in the state and umbrella for all health care policy. It's a great place to be if you want to continue to reform, improve and move forward on quality health

care, which I think Maryland does a good job with," said Taylor.

Gov. Robert Ehrlich Jr. called him with the news of the

appointment on Friday morning. The appointment to the committee was made by the governor with the advice and consent of the Maryland Senate.

"I told them I would support the nomination," said Sen. John Hafer of the District 1 legislative delegation.

As the senator from Taylor's district, Hafer was consulted before the nomination was placed in front of the entire Senate.

"I think Cas Taylor is as knowledgeable about health care in the state of Maryland as anybody," said Hafer.

He pointed out that Taylor had played a large part in setting up the state health care commissions.

"I can bring to them all my experience in the field. I've dealt with so much health

care legislation over the years and played a leading role in it," said Taylor.

The Maryland Health Care Commission was established in 1999 as a combination of prior commissions. The Maryland Health Care Commission's purpose is to streamline the regulatory system to better articulate, coordinate and implement a single state policy.

"I am absolutely thrilled he will be joining us as a commissioner. Casper Taylor, as the speaker and committee chair at one point, was the author of the legislation that created one of our predecessor committees," said Barbara McLean, executive director of the commission.

The commission's responsibilities include:

- Developing a comprehensive standard health benefit plan.

- Creating a database on nonhospital health care services.

- Establishing the HMO Quality and Performance Evaluation System.

- Developing quality performance measures for nursing homes, ambulatory surgical facilities, hospitals and managed behavioral health care organizations.

- Implementing a certificate of need program for certain health care facilities and services.

- Adopting a state health plan related to certificate of need decisions.

- Overseeing electronic claims clearing houses.

"Cas Taylor is a champion in the area of health care and it is a position where he is well-suited to serve," said Delegate LeRoy Myers Jr., who is the delegate serving Taylor's district.

Taylor will replace John Pichotto, vice president of CareFirst, who resigned.