

Legislative Update, With Five Weeks Left in the Formal Session

Q2, June 2024

Dear Members,

Your voice was heard at our March 5 Advocacy Day at the State House! One of our key requests of legislators that day was to extend the health services, staffing, and training flexibilities. As part of the supplemental budget, the House, Senate, and Governor [extended the flexibilities](#) through March 2025. Special thanks to those who attended Advocacy Day, for successfully voicing our concerns and legislative priorities to key Representatives and Senators. I would also like to thank all members as we could not have accomplished this without your continued membership and involvement.

We are now focused on advancing other priorities, with five weeks to go in the formal legislative session. In the two-year Massachusetts legislative cycle, the most substantive actions are often taken leading up to the end of the formal session, which is July 31. The next few weeks may provide important opportunities for us to try to advance our legislative priorities before the session ends, and we may be reaching out to you for assistance in this effort.

The Joint Committee on Elder Affairs combined two of Mass-ALA's top priorities with other policy changes in one bill: [An Act Relative to Assisted Living and Basic Health Services](#). The bills we support that were included in this broader bill are the An Act Authorizing Common Sense Health Services in Assisted Living and An Act Directing the Administration to Amend the Frail Elder Home and Community-Based Waiver to Permit Eligible Older Adults to Choose to Reside in Certified Assisted Living Residences.

The Assisted Living and Basic Health Services bill was reported favorably by the Committee on Health Care Financing, and referred to the Committee on Senate Ways and Means in April. As it has advanced through the process, we have been advocating for changes to the bill. The requested changes were detailed in our Advocacy Day [Brochure](#):

- Allow each assisted living residence to select which services they can offer given their staffing structure at each community.
- Add clarity and structure to Section 8 surrounding EOE's ability to levy fines on
- Align Section 12 on whistleblower protections for employees with existing Massachusetts law.

We are also keeping a close eye on how state and federal legislators from Massachusetts are working to regulate private equity investment in health care in response to the Steward Hospital crisis. Most of the state legislation on this is not focused on assisted living. Only some aspects of one bill that is advancing through the legislature would impact assisted living. To mediate any potential harm on our sector, we have been educating legislators about how different assisted living is from the other settings they are focused on with this bill, and advocating for assisted living to not be included in its scope.

Our national association partner, Argentum, has also sent an update recently about legislation regarding private equity investment in assisted living on the federal level, which you can read [here](#). We will continue to monitor this emerging issue and keep members informed on any important updates.

We have engaged in grassroots advocacy campaigns in the past when we needed your help in asking legislators to take action. Please stay tuned over the coming month as we may ask you to [contact your legislators](#) if it would be helpful on one of these issues. If you would like to have one of your legislators visit your community, we are happy to join you for the visit and would benefit from knowing when such visits occur. We appreciate your interest and engagement as we continue to serve as the Voice of Assisted Living.

Brian Doherty

President and CEO

Mass-ALA