



### **Five Key Points:**

1. Skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers and assisted living campuses were on the frontlines in our battle against COVID-19. Every death is to be mourned, and every life saved is to be celebrated. The healthcare heroes and their organizations saved tens of thousands more lives than were lost.
2. Thankfully, the vaccines work, the clinical lessons learned are making a difference, and FAR fewer people are dying. However, in many respects 2021 and 2022 will be harder for the long-term and post-acute care sector due to ongoing workforce and financial issues.
  - a) Workforce recruitment and retention issues existed long before the pandemic and they remain today. While money is an important component, it is even more critical to find solutions to ensure our centers are able to recruit and train staff.
  - b) Costs and expenses remain high while revenue and census remain low.
3. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are at the forefront of our work. Last year the COVID-19 pandemic and social justice unrest highlighted issues surrounding social determinants of health, healthcare disparities, and healthcare equity. Alongside our members we are actively working, discussing, and navigating a better way forward on this front.
4. Skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers and assisted living campuses in Maryland did not receive additional state funding during the pandemic. They did receive important in-kind financial support from the state, primarily with COVID-19 testing and, to a lesser extent, with personal protective equipment (PPE). Skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers in Maryland did receive federal CARES Act grants and Medicare advance payments (loans) in 2020. Those grants have ceased and skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers have begun to repay the Medicare advances.
5. The long-term and post-acute care sector has been facing a financial crisis for years due to low Medicaid reimbursements (the primary coverage for nursing home residents). In Maryland, we appreciate the incremental rate increases we have received over the years and look forward to our ongoing work together to ensure adequate funding for quality care.

### **Future Challenges & Opportunities:**

- Quality care; Medicaid funding; market consolidation; calls for payment and delivery reform; lame-duck governor; antiquated Maryland departmental infrastructure; COVID half story; the election cycle.

### **Keys to Meeting the Challenges & Opportunities:**

- Data solutions; objectivity; relationships vested in the long-term.

