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Seniors told to be advocates

Sarbanes backs group's call for improved elderly health care

BY LARRY PERL

Using the Roland Park Place retirement community as a backdrop, three legislators Feb. 5 endorsed an advocacy group's campaign to improve health care in Maryland.

U.S. Rep. John Sarbanes of the 3rd Congressional District and Dels. Shawn Tarrant and Barbara Robinson of District 40 asked the audience of 50 seniors and staff to support the campaign by MidAtlantic Lifespan, a Columbia-based organization that represents more than 300 health care groups and providers serving about 45,000 Marylanders, according to Lifespan president Isabella Firth.

The third District 40 delegate, Frank Conaway did not attend.

Predicting a 158 percent increase in the state's senior population by 2030 compared to 1990, Lifespan is promoting its "Honor the Promise" campaign and asking the state legislature to adopt four "key action items," including:

•Improving access to senior care options by adequately supporting services to residents of senior care facilities.

•Stabilizing the state's geriatric care workforce by recruiting and retaining nurses, increasing their salaries and increasing access to education grants for people thinking of entering the health care field.

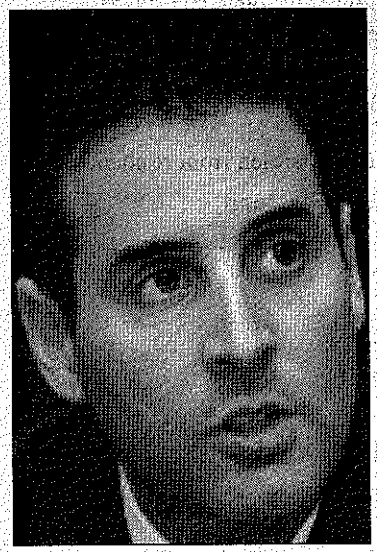
•Fixing the Medicaid eligibility system and eliminating delays in the approval of state assistance for seniors.

•Reducing administrative burdens on senior care providers, partly by better staffing oversight agencies.

"I encourage you to get as engaged as you can as advocates," said Sarbanes, the newly elected congressman and son of retired U.S. Sen. Paul Sarbanes.

Sarbanes, an attorney and former chairman of the health care practice at the law firm Venable LLP, said Roland Park Place was one of his longtime clients. Sarbanes now serves on the Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee.

Robinson and Tarrant, also newly elected, threw their support behind Lifespan as well. Tarrant serves on the legislature's Health and Government Operations Committee.



FILE PHOTO

U.S. Rep. John Sarbanes was one of three legislators who backed an advocacy group's call for improved health care for seniors.

Robinson, who was elected at age 70, stressed that she ran for public office so that she could focus on senior issues.

"Over 60 is not over the hill," she told the audience, which applauded.

E-mail editor Larry Perl at lperl@patuxent.com.

Crime log

Barclay Street

3100 block, between 9 a.m. and 1:24 p.m. Jan. 30. Computer and cordless phone stolen from residence. Entry gained through unlocked window.

Chestnut Avenue

3400 block, between midnight and 8 a.m. Feb. 1. Chop saw stolen from residence. Entry gained by throwing a brick through front window.

3500 block, between 7:15 and 10:30 p.m. Feb. 1. Blue 2000 Dodge Neon with Maryland tag number LYR882 stolen.

Greenmount Avenue

3300 block, between 3 and 5:45 a.m. Cash stolen from register at King Fried Chicken. Entry gained by prying out a window panel on front door.

Homeland Avenue

400 block at 5 a.m. Jan. 30. Armed assailant stole cash from man at ATM.

Kerneway

4600 block, between 9 a.m. and