Overview
As we all know, nursing homes are a great value to residents, families and taxpayers. This document is intended to provide you with helpful tips about how to plan a tour of your facility for your legislators.

Having local legislators tour your long-term care facility is an important and effective way to demonstrate and communicate the good work that you are doing to care for your residents. There’s no substitute for a hands-on experience for them to appreciate the challenges you face and the hard work that goes into taking care of the daily needs of residents.

You may want to plan the tour to coincide with an already scheduled special event such as an award ceremony recognizing an employee, a facility open house, a 100-year old birthday celebration or a holiday activity.

If one of these types of events does not fit in conjunction with the legislator’s schedule, it is still very valuable to have them tour your facility on a “regular” day so they can have a firsthand view of your facility and your residents, and so you can inform them of important issues to long-term care.

Please utilize MHCA staff throughout the planning process so we can be of assistance to you to provide information or to answer any questions you have. If you need to reach MHCA’s staff for any reason, please contact Vanessa Henderson at vanessa@mshca.com or Melzana Fuller at melzana@mshca.com or by phone at MHCA’s office by calling (601) 956-3472.

Getting Started:
• Invite legislators to tour your facility when the legislature is not in session.

• Contact your legislators for suitable dates and times. Calling and e-mailing them to invite them is the most effective way to schedule the tour at a time that is convenient for both of you.

• You can find your legislators’ e-mail and phone number by going to the following links:
  State Representatives:
  http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/members/h_roster.pdf
  State Senators:
  http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/members/s_roster.pdf

• When inviting them to tour your facility, be sure to provide them with complete details for their schedule such as the street address, how long they need to be available to tour, and any specific entrance where they will be met.

• It is recommended that your tour last no longer than an hour and a half.

• Be sure to provide them with your mobile phone number as a contact.

• Call your legislator the day before the tour to let them know you are looking forward to seeing them the next day—which also serves as a friendly reminder to them of their upcoming visit.

• Contact MHCA staff to advise them once a tour is scheduled for your legislators.
Steps to a Successful Long-Term Care Facility Tour

Prepare for a legislator facility tour:

- After contacting MHCA staff, notify your facility’s staff, residents, families and friends about the legislator’s upcoming visit.
- Plan for someone to take photos during the facility tour in a respectful and non-intrusive manner.
- Plan your “route” of your facility to make sure you have an efficient, planned tour.
- Be prepared to answer relevant questions about your facility and the long-term care profession. If you have any questions about this, MHCA can provide you with background information.

Day of the tour:

- Facility owner/administrator greets legislator and guides the tour.
- Start by explaining the facts, figures and history of your facility (how long you’ve been open, how many beds/residents you have, how many employees you have, amount of taxes paid by your facility, number of vendors you work with, a summary of what types of residents you care for, etc.) To make this even more meaningful, prepare a one or two page “Fact Sheet” about your facility with this information that you can provide during and after the tour.
- Always manage the actual tour yourself, but be sure to include key members of your staff on the tour with the legislator and you.
- Show real life examples of the challenges of compliance and how you address them.
- Explain and show examples of the various types of residents who are cared for in your facility.
- Plan for times the legislator can interact with residents in appropriate settings.
- Arrange a time at the end of the tour to discuss long-term care issues with the legislator. Some suggested Discussion Points are provided on the last page of this document. This will be helpful to the legislator as the majority of them are not in the health care field—and the more you can demonstrate your knowledge and authority on long-term care issues, the more they will rely on you as a resource of information in the future.

After the tour:

- Send a thank you letter the day after the facility tour to show your appreciation for the legislator’s time and willingness to tour your facility.
- In the thank you letter, be sure to mention/remind them of any specific issues you discussed or provide them with additional answers to any questions they asked that need clarification or follow-up from you.
- Enclose a photo or two for the legislator to have from their tour.
- Send MHCA a brief Overview of the Legislative Visit (using the last page of this document as a guide) and any questions the legislator had that need clarification or follow-up from MHCA.
Discussion Points for Legislative Visit:

- The importance of appropriate Medicaid reimbursement rates for nursing homes to allow continued delivery of high quality skilled nursing care.

- Maintain home and community-based waivers at the current level.

- Oppose legislation imposing mandatory liability insurance on nursing homes.

- Maintain current level of nursing home beds allowed by the State under the Certificate of Need law.

- Oppose an increase in number of acute patients allowed in personal care assisted living facilities.

Overview of the Legislative Visit:

- Name of facility:

- Date of visit:

- Administrator:

- Staff involved with visit:

- Length of visit:

- Topics discussed during the visit: