



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

HB 945 - Nursing Homes - Complaints - Notification and Consultation
House Health Committee
February 26, 2026
FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the House Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 945, which strengthens Maryland's system of oversight for nursing homes by ensuring timely communication and collaboration between the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and local health departments when serious complaints arise.

My name is Sara Westrick, Advocacy Director for AARP Maryland, and I am a member of the Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities. AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the state, with approximately 850,000 members. We represent the interests of Maryland's over 50 population, including families who rely on high-quality nursing home and assisted living care. AARP Maryland also has a long history of advocacy on long-term care issues.

HB 945 adds an important and practical requirement to current law. When MDH initiates an investigation of a nursing home complaint involving actual harm or immediate jeopardy, the Department must immediately notify the local health department and consult with the local health officer as the investigation moves forward. This communication is critical to ensuring that issues affecting resident health and safety are addressed quickly, comprehensively, and with the benefit of local public health expertise.

Local health departments often serve as the first point of contact for families, advocates, and community members concerned about nursing home conditions. They also maintain on-the-ground knowledge of facilities, staffing trends, prior issues, and community context. By ensuring consultation between MDH and local officials, HB 945 helps improve response coordination during serious incidents.

For residents and their families, this bill represents a meaningful step toward safer, more responsive nursing home oversight. For state and local health partners, it formalizes collaboration that will ultimately help protect some of Maryland's most vulnerable older adults.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Committee issue a favorable report.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick at swestrick@aarp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.

