

SENATE BILL 920

J1, J3

5lr2424
CF HB 1142

By: **Senator Gile**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2025

Assigned to: Finance

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 16, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Health – Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group – Establishment**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group to ensure
4 adequate access to applicable home- and community-based services ~~and the~~
5 ~~existence of an adequate direct care workforce~~ in the State; requiring the Maryland
6 Department of Health to provide certain support to the Advisory Group; and
7 generally relating to the Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group.

8 BY adding to

9 Article – Health – General

10 Section 15–1201 through 15–1205 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 12.
11 Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group”

12 Annotated Code of Maryland

13 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – Health – General**

17 **SUBTITLE 12. MARYLAND INTERESTED PARTIES ADVISORY GROUP.**

18 **15–1201.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
2 INDICATED.

3 (B) "ADVISORY GROUP" MEANS THE MARYLAND INTERESTED PARTIES
4 ADVISORY GROUP ESTABLISHED UNDER § 15-1202 OF THIS SUBTITLE AND
5 REQUIRED UNDER 42 C.F.R. § 447.203.

6 (C) "APPLICABLE SERVICE CATEGORIES" MEANS HOMEMAKER SERVICES,
7 HOME HEALTH AIDE SERVICES, PERSONAL CARE SERVICES, AND HABILITATION
8 SERVICES.

9 (D) "CONSUMER" MEANS AN APPLICANT FOR, A RECIPIENT OF, OR AN
10 INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICAID HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES,
11 OR THE INDIVIDUAL'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE.

12 (E) "CONSUMER ORGANIZATION" MEANS A STATE OR LOCAL CONSUMER
13 ADVOCACY GROUP OR OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION THAT
14 REPRESENTS THE INTERESTS OF, OR PROVIDES DIRECT SERVICES TO, CONSUMERS
15 OF MEDICAID HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.

16 (F) "DIRECT CARE WORKER" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL:

17 (1) EMPLOYED BY A MEDICAID PROVIDER, STATE AGENCY, OR THIRD
18 PARTY;

19 (2) WHO CONTRACTS WITH A MEDICAID PROVIDER, STATE AGENCY,
20 OR THIRD PARTY;

21 (3) DELIVERING SERVICES UNDER A SELF-DIRECTED SERVICES
22 DELIVERY MODEL; OR

23 (4) WHO IS PAID TO PROVIDE HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED
24 SERVICES THROUGH AN APPLICABLE SERVICE CATEGORY.

25 (G) "HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES" MEANS MEDICAID
26 HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES DELIVERED THROUGH THE STATE PLAN,
27 A WAIVER UNDER § 1915(C) OF THE FEDERAL SOCIAL SECURITY ACT, A MANAGED
28 CARE PROGRAM, OR OTHER DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

29 (H) "PERSONAL CARE" HAS THE MEANING STATED UNDER § 19-301 OF THIS
30 ARTICLE.

1 (I) "PROVIDER ASSOCIATION" MEANS A TRADE ASSOCIATION ~~EXEMPT~~
 2 ~~FROM FEDERAL INCOME TAXATION UNDER § 501(C)(6) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE~~
 3 ~~CODE~~ THAT REPRESENTS DIRECT CARE EMPLOYERS.

4 (J) "WORKER ORGANIZATION" MEANS AN ORGANIZATION THAT:

5 (1) IS EXEMPT FROM FEDERAL INCOME TAXATION UNDER §§
 6 501(C)(3) THROUGH (6) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE;

7 (2) IS NOT DOMINATED, CONTROLLED, OR FUNDED BY A DIRECT CARE
 8 EMPLOYER; AND

9 (3) HAS AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF DEMONSTRATED EXPERIENCE
 10 ENGAGING WITH AND ADVOCATING FOR DIRECT CARE WORKERS.

11 15-1202.

12 (A) THERE IS A MARYLAND INTERESTED PARTIES ADVISORY GROUP
 13 WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.

14 (B) THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE ADVISORY GROUP IS TO ~~ENSURE:~~

15 ~~(1) ADVISE AND CONSULT ON MEDICAID PAYMENT RATES ARE~~
 16 ~~SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE RATE SUFFICIENCY, ENSURING ADEQUATE ACCESS TO~~
 17 ~~APPLICABLE SERVICE CATEGORIES; AND~~

18 ~~(2) THE EXISTENCE OF AN ADEQUATE AND QUALIFIED DIRECT CARE~~
 19 ~~WORKFORCE TO PROVIDE SERVICES IN THE STATE.~~

20 15-1203.

21 (A) THE ADVISORY GROUP CONSISTS OF:

22 (1) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY, OF HEALTH CARE FINANCING, OR THE
 23 DEPUTY SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;

24 (2) THE SECRETARY OF LABOR, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;
 25 AND

26 (3) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE DEPUTY
 27 SECRETARY OF HEALTH CARE FINANCING, OR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S
 28 DESIGNEE:

29 (I) THREE CONSUMERS;

- 1 (II) TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF CONSUMER ORGANIZATIONS;
- 2 (III) THREE DIRECT CARE WORKERS;
- 3 (IV) TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF WORKER ORGANIZATIONS; AND
- 4 (V) ~~ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A PROVIDER ASSOCIATION; AND~~
- 5 (VI) ~~ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC; AND~~

6 ~~(3) ONE NONVOTING ADVISORY MEMBER FROM THE DIVISION OF~~
 7 ~~HEALTH CARE FINANCING AND MEDICAID WITH ADVANCED DATA LITERACY TO~~
 8 ~~ADDRESS ANY QUESTION OR ISSUE RELATED TO THE DATA EXAMINED BY THE~~
 9 ~~ADVISORY GROUP~~ THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF PROVIDER ASSOCIATIONS, OF
 10 WHOM:

11 1. TWO SHALL BE REPRESENTATIVES OF A RESIDENTIAL
 12 SERVICE AGENCY; AND

13 2. ONE SHALL BE A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN EMPLOYER
 14 TRADE ASSOCIATION.

15 (B) TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THE MEMBERS APPOINTED TO THE
 16 ADVISORY GROUP SHALL REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF LIVED EXPERIENCE WITH
 17 DISABILITY, AS WELL AS THE GEOGRAPHIC, RACIAL, ETHNIC, CULTURAL, GENDER,
 18 SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, GENDER EXPRESSION, AGE, AND
 19 SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY OF THE STATE.

20 (C) (1) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF HEALTH CARE FINANCING, OR THE
 21 DEPUTY SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE, SHALL ESTABLISH AN APPLICATION PROCESS
 22 THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF
 23 MEMBERS.

24 (2) THE APPLICATION AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTION SHALL BE
 25 PUBLISHED ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE.

26 (D) (1) THE DEPUTY SECRETARY, OF HEALTH CARE FINANCING, OR THE
 27 DEPUTY SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE, SHALL CHAIR THE ADVISORY GROUP.

28 (2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE STAFF AND SUPPORT FOR
 29 THE ADVISORY GROUP, INCLUDING APPROPRIATE LOGISTICAL, AND
 30 INFORMATIONAL, ~~AND FINANCIAL~~ SUPPORT TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL
 31 PARTICIPATION OF DIRECT CARE WORKERS AND CONSUMERS IN THE ADVISORY
 32 GROUP.

1 (E) ~~(1) THE TERM OF AN APPOINTED MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY GROUP~~
2 ~~IS 3 YEARS.~~

3 ~~(2) THE SECRETARY SHALL ENSURE THAT MEMBERS SERVE~~
4 ~~STAGGERED TERMS.~~

5 ~~(3) AT THE END OF A TERM, AN APPOINTED MEMBER CONTINUES TO~~
6 ~~SERVE UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED AND QUALIFIES.~~

7 ~~(4) A MEMBER WHO IS APPOINTED AFTER A TERM HAS BEGUN SERVES~~
8 ~~ONLY FOR THE REST OF THE TERM AND UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED AND~~
9 ~~QUALIFIES.~~

10 (5) THE SECRETARY MAY REMOVE OR SUSPEND A MEMBER OF THE
11 ADVISORY GROUP FOR MISCONDUCT, INCOMPETENCE, OR NEGLECT OF DUTIES
12 AFTER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MEMBER TO BE HEARD.

13 (F) A MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY GROUP:

14 (1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE
15 ADVISORY GROUP; BUT

16 (2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE
17 STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

18 (G) (1) BEGINNING NOVEMBER 1, 2025, THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL
19 MEET ~~ON A QUARTERLY BASIS~~ ANNUALLY.

20 (2) MEETING DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATIONS SHALL BE SELECTED TO
21 MAXIMIZE MEMBER ATTENDANCE.

22 15-1204.

23 (A) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH STANDARDIZED
24 PROCEDURES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ADVISORY GROUP AND MAKE THE
25 PROCEDURES AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC ON A DEDICATED PAGE OF THE
26 DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE.

27 (2) THE DEDICATED PAGE ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE SHALL
28 ALSO INCLUDE:

29 (I) A LIST OF CURRENT ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS;

1 (II) THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA FOR
2 ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS;

3 (III) THE LOCATION, DATE, AND TIME OF EACH ADVISORY
4 GROUP MEETING WITH AT LEAST 30 CALENDAR DAYS' ADVANCE NOTICE;

5 (IV) OPTIONS FOR VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS OF
6 THE ADVISORY GROUP;

7 (V) PROCEDURES TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION
8 FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY;

9 (VI) A NOTATION OF AT WHICH MEETINGS THE GENERAL PUBLIC
10 WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY OR MAKE COMMENTS; AND

11 (VII) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT, THE
12 AGENDA AND MEETING MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ADVISORY
13 GROUP, INCLUDING A LIST OF MEETING ATTENDEES.

14 (B) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE SUFFICIENT DATA AND RESOURCES
15 AT LEAST 30 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF A MEETING TO SUPPORT INFORMED
16 PARTICIPATION IN ADVISORY GROUP DISCUSSIONS, INCLUDING:

17 (1) ~~DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION COLLECTED BY THE MARYLAND~~
18 ~~DEPARTMENT OF LABOR UNDER § 15-156 OF THIS TITLE, INCLUDING DATA~~
19 ~~COLLECTED BY RESIDENTIAL SERVICE AGENCIES RELATED TO DIRECT CARE~~
20 ~~WORKFORCE;~~

21 (i) ~~STABILITY, INCLUDING TOTAL NUMBERS OF FULL-TIME~~
22 ~~AND PART-TIME HOME CARE WORKERS, PERCENTAGE OF THE YEAR THAT THE~~
23 ~~EMPLOYEES WERE EMPLOYED, AVERAGE LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT, TURNOVER~~
24 ~~RATE, VACANCIES, AND UNSTAFFED HOURS MEASURED BY HOURS ALLOTTED IN~~
25 ~~PLANS OF SERVICE FOR WHICH THE CONSUMER IS NOT RECEIVING CARE;~~

26 (ii) ~~COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS, INCLUDING THE HIGHEST,~~
27 ~~LOWEST, MEDIAN, AND AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE PAID BY PROVIDER AGENCIES,~~
28 ~~NUMBER OF HOURS AUTHORIZED FOR OVERTIME PAY, NUMBER OF HOURS PAID FOR~~
29 ~~TRAVEL TIME BETWEEN CLIENTS, AND AVERAGE DAYS OF EARNED SICK AND SAFE~~
30 ~~LEAVE PAID TO HOME CARE WORKERS EACH YEAR;~~

31 (iii) ~~EMPLOYEE BENEFITS, INCLUDING HEALTH, DENTAL, AND~~
32 ~~VISION BENEFITS, LIFE AND DISABILITY INSURANCE, PAID LEAVE, RETIREMENT,~~
33 ~~AND TUITION REIMBURSEMENT;~~

1 ~~(IV) PROVIDER COSTS RELATED TO THE WORKFORCE,~~
2 ~~INCLUDING COSTS OF REQUIRED TRAININGS, TRAVEL COSTS FOR DIRECT CARE~~
3 ~~WORKERS SUCH AS MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT OR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION~~
4 ~~SUBSIDIES, AND COSTS OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR DIRECT CARE~~
5 ~~WORKERS; AND~~

6 ~~(V) DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION INCLUDING AGE, GENDER,~~
7 ~~RACE AND ETHNICITY, HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINED, CERTIFICATIONS~~
8 ~~HELD, AND NUMBER OF YEARS OF DIRECT CARE WORK EXPERIENCE~~ CURRENT AND
9 PROPOSED PAYMENT RATES;

10 (2) ~~FEDERALLY REQUIRED INFORMATION WITH A DETAILED~~
11 ~~EXPLANATION OF THE METHODOLOGY AND DATA LIMITATIONS FOR EACH REPORT,~~
12 INCLUDING:

13 (I) HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES PAYMENT
14 TRANSPARENCY REPORTS;

15 (II) PAYMENT ADEQUACY REPORTS AS REQUIRED UNDER 42
16 C.F.R. § 441.311(E); AND

17 (III) ACCESS-TO-CARE DATA, AS REQUIRED UNDER 42 C.F.R. §
18 441.311(D)(2);

19 (3) BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WAGE
20 DATA AND OTHER LABOR MARKET AND WORKFORCE DATA;

21 (4) BENCHMARKING AND RATE STUDIES FOR HOME- AND
22 COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT;

23 (5) RATE INFORMATION FROM NEIGHBORING OR SIMILARLY
24 SITUATED STATES; AND

25 (6) ACCESS-TO-CARE METRICS, INCLUDING:

26 (I) THE NUMBER OF CONSUMERS RECEIVING APPLICABLE
27 SERVICES; AND

28 (II) THE NUMBER OF UTILIZATION HOURS FOR APPLICABLE
29 SERVICE CATEGORIES;

30 ~~(III) A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE MAINTAINS THE~~
31 ~~MEDICAID WAIVER WAITING LIST FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES;~~

1 ~~(IV) THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ON THE WAITING LIST;~~

2 ~~(V) THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF TIME NEW WAIVER ENROLLEES~~
3 ~~WAITED TO ENROLL; AND~~

4 ~~(VI) THE NUMBER OF TIMES INDIVIDUALS MUST RE-APPLY TO~~
5 ~~RECEIVE SERVICES.~~

6 ~~(C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSULT THE ADVISORY GROUP BEFORE~~
7 ~~MAKING CHANGES TO PAYMENT RATES FOR APPLICABLE SERVICE CATEGORIES AND~~
8 ~~SHALL AFFORD DEFERENCE TO THE ADVISORY GROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS.~~

9 ~~(D) (1) TO SUPPORT THE ADVISORY GROUP AND ENGAGE THE BROADER~~
10 ~~DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE AND CONSUMERS ACROSS THE STATE, THE~~
11 ~~DEPARTMENT SHALL DEVELOP A PUBLIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION PLAN~~
12 ~~TO INFORM DIRECT CARE WORKERS AND DIRECT CARE CONSUMERS OF:~~

13 ~~(I) THE ADVISORY GROUP, ITS PURPOSE, MEETINGS, AND~~
14 ~~OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT; AND~~

15 ~~(H) A SUMMARY OF ITS ANNUAL REPORT AND ANY~~
16 ~~RECOMMENDATIONS.~~

17 ~~(2) THE PUBLIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION PLAN MUST:~~

18 ~~(I) ENSURE BROAD LANGUAGE ACCESS AND BE CULTURALLY~~
19 ~~COMPETENT;~~

20 ~~(II) USE TARGETED METHODS THAT WILL EFFECTIVELY~~
21 ~~ENGAGE DIRECT CARE WORKERS AND DIRECT CARE CONSUMERS, INCLUDING~~
22 ~~ADVERTISING AND OTHER MARKETING TOOLS;~~

23 ~~(III) INCLUDE AN OPTION FOR DIRECT CARE WORKERS AND~~
24 ~~DIRECT CARE CONSUMERS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION, INCLUDING A MAILING~~
25 ~~ADDRESS, E MAIL ADDRESS, OR TELEPHONE NUMBER, FOR PURPOSES OF~~
26 ~~RECEIVING ONGOING COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT CONCERNING THE~~
27 ~~ADVISORY GROUP AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ADVISORY~~
28 ~~GROUP; AND~~

29 ~~(IV) REQUIRE EACH RESIDENTIAL SERVICE AGENCY TO~~
30 ~~PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE ADVISORY GROUP DIRECTLY TO ITS~~
31 ~~EMPLOYEES.~~

32 15-1205.

1 (A) THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL:

2 (1) EVALUATE THE SUFFICIENCY OF MEDICAID PAYMENT RATES FOR
3 APPLICABLE SERVICE CATEGORIES; AND

4 (2) ~~EXAMINE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR THE DIRECT CARE~~
5 ~~WORKFORCE, INCLUDING CURRENT WAGE RATES AND OFFERED BENEFITS,~~
6 ~~INITIATIVES FOR RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT OF WORKERS, TRAINING~~
7 ~~REQUIREMENTS, AND ACCESS TO WORKER ORGANIZATIONS;~~

8 (3) EVALUATE CHALLENGES TO ACCESSING CARE FOR APPLICABLE
9 MEDICAID HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES; ~~AND~~

10 (4) ~~DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S~~
11 ~~ENGAGEMENT WITH DIRECT CARE WORKERS AND CONSUMERS.~~

12 (B) (1) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1 EACH YEAR, BEGINNING IN 2026,
13 THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL REPORT ITS ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO
14 THE GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT
15 ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

16 (2) ~~THE REPORT OF THE ADVISORY GROUP SHALL ADDRESS:~~

17 (i) ~~RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING MEDICAID~~
18 ~~PAYMENT RATES FOR APPLICABLE SERVICE CATEGORIES;~~

19 (ii) ~~EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS FOR DIRECT CARE WORKERS,~~
20 ~~INCLUDING A WAGE FLOOR AND EFFORTS TO COMBAT MISCLASSIFICATION OF~~
21 ~~EMPLOYEES;~~

22 (iii) ~~REMOVING BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO CARE AND~~
23 ~~RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY AND CONTINUOUS~~
24 ~~CARE;~~

25 (iv) ~~MEANS THE STATE CAN USE TO COMMUNICATE~~
26 ~~INFORMATION TO DIRECT CARE WORKERS AND CONSUMERS ABOUT THE PURVIEW~~
27 ~~OF THE ADVISORY GROUP, ITS PURPOSE, ITS MEETINGS AND HEARINGS, AND~~
28 ~~OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE INPUT; AND~~

29 (v) ~~THE ADVISORY GROUP'S REVIEW OF ANY RACIAL, GENDER,~~
30 ~~OR ECONOMIC DISPARITIES IMPACTING DIRECT CARE WORKERS OR CONSUMERS~~
31 ~~AND EXAMPLES OF RATES AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS FOR APPLICABLE SERVICES IN~~

~~1 OTHER STATES WITH FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR DIRECT CARE WORKERS AND
2 CONSUMERS.~~

~~3 (3) ANY RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE ADVISORY GROUP
4 MUST RECEIVE AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OF AT LEAST SEVEN MEMBERS A MAJORITY
5 VOTE.~~

~~6 (4) BEFORE THE SUBMISSION OF THE REPORT UNDER PARAGRAPH
7 (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REVIEW THE REPORT ON
8 RECEIPT FROM THE ADVISORY GROUP AND WITHIN 60 DAYS AFTER RECEIVING THE
9 REPORT RESPOND TO ANY RECOMMENDATION, INCLUDING ANY JUSTIFICATION FOR
10 DECLINING TO IMPLEMENT A RECOMMENDATION OF THE ADVISORY GROUP.~~

~~11 (5) FOLLOWING THE DEPARTMENT'S REVIEW OF THE ANNUAL
12 REPORT, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:~~

~~13 (i) PROVIDE THE ADVISORY GROUP WITH AN OPPORTUNITY
14 TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE REPORT; AND~~

~~15 (ii) (C) POST THE DEPARTMENT SHALL POST THE REPORT
16 TO THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER THE REPORT HAS BEEN
17 FINALIZED.~~

~~18 (e) (D) THE ADVISORY GROUP MAY HOLD OPPORTUNITIES TO SOLICIT
19 AND COLLECT TESTIMONY FROM THE PUBLIC AND INVITE INPUT FROM EMPLOYER
20 ORGANIZATIONS, WORKER ORGANIZATIONS, CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUPS, AND
21 OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DIRECT CARE INDUSTRY.~~

~~22 (D) (E) (1) AN EMPLOYER OR STATE AGENCY MAY NOT TAKE
23 RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST A DIRECT CARE WORKER OR CONSUMER FOR
24 PARTICIPATION IN THE ADVISORY GROUP.~~

~~25 (2) THIS SECTION DOES NOT LIMIT THE RIGHTS OF DIRECT CARE
26 WORKERS UNDER STATE OR FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OR LABOR LAW, OR
27 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS.~~

28 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Deputy Secretary of
29 Health Care Financing, or the Deputy Secretary's designee, shall appoint the initial
30 members of the Maryland Interested Parties Advisory Group on or before October 1, 2025.

31 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
32 1, 2025.