



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Ryan Moran, Dr.PH, Acting Secretary

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill (SB) 945 – Community-Based Residential Facilities - Licensing Entities - Provision of Licensing Criteria and Single Point of Contact– Letter of Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill (SB) 945 – Community-Based Residential Facilities - Licensing Entities - Provision of Licensing Criteria and Single Point of Contact.

Senate Bill 945 seeks to require licensing authorities to provide criteria, upon request, regarding how they determine whether to issue or renew licenses for community facilities to an interested party. Additionally, the legislation seeks to mandate that licensing authorities designate a single point of contact to handle complaints, concerns, or issues related to community-based residential facilities.

The Department remains committed to transparency but notes that the materials produced during the review of an application for licensure by the Department are protected under the Medical Review Committee privilege, as outlined in Health Occupations Code § 1-401(d)(1). Medical Review Committees consist of regulatory boards and agencies established by state or federal law to license, certify, or discipline any health care provider, as per Health Occupations Code § 1-401(b)(1), which also includes the licensing of community behavioral health providers regulated under COMAR 10.63 by the Department.

Additionally, revisions to COMAR 10.63 currently underway will further define the licensure requirements for community-based behavioral health providers. The revisions to COMAR 10.63.06 will clarify requirements of the license application process and the necessary documentation that must accompany license applications.

The Department's Office of Policy and Planning - Office of Licensing and Compliance serves as the primary point of contact for complaints, concerns, or issues regarding community-based behavioral health providers. In addition, the Department offers four options to report concerns to the Department including two digital forms, a public email address, and a direct phone number¹

¹ See "Contact" <https://health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/COMAR-10-63-Programs-.aspx>

that constituents and consumers can use to report complaints² and critical incidents.³ The Department carefully tracks all of these methods of reporting, entering each inquiry into the Department's database to maintain an accurate record of the type of incident reported, action taken, and the resolution of each case. The Department has dedicated staff to review all complaints and critical incidents, and they route inquiries received to the appropriate investigative authority internally and externally to the Department.

In addition to the Office of Policy & Planning, the Maryland Department of Health operates the Office of Constituent Services. This is a "one-stop shop" for constituents to call, request or receive information, issue complaints, and seek guidance. The Office of Constituent Services is a centralized service and any inquiries received are routed to the appropriate Department and / or Administration for review and follow up.

The Department is committed to working with the Committee to ensure that the licensure process remains transparent and efficient while safeguarding the integrity of sensitive information and maintaining a streamlined system for addressing public concerns. As part of these protections, we suggest two technical amendments to clarify that the Department can provide general, regulatory criteria but not the specific materials produced during the review of an application for a specific licensure applicant.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan B. Moran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

Ryan B. Moran, DrPH, MHSA
Acting Secretary

Attachment:
Amendments

² <https://www.cognitoforms.com/MDH3/BHA1063ComplaintForm>

³ <https://www.cognitoforms.com/mdh3/bhacomar1063criticalincidentreportform>

In the Senate Finance Committee

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 945

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 2, beginning in line 16, strike “**TO AN INTERESTED PARTY**”

On page 2, in line 18, strike “**OF A**” and insert “**FOR**”

On age 2, in line 19, strike “**FACILITY**” and replace with “**FACILITIES.**”