



March 6, 2026

**Senate Finance Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

SB 878 - Health Facilities - Certified Recovery Residences - Unannounced Inspections

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 100,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports and offers amendments for SB 878 - Health Facilities - Certified Recovery Residences - Unannounced Inspections. This bill would ensure proper oversight and quality assurance at recovery residences.

Recovery residences provide housing that supports recovery from substance use disorders. They do not provide clinical treatment but are important stepping stones for many people seeking a stable place to reside early in recovery. Maryland has a certification process that many recovery residences go through and that is required to access state funding. The Behavioral Health Administration administers this process through the Maryland Certification of Recovery Residences (MCORR) application and uses the National Alliance for Recovery Residences 2018 Quality Standards.^{1,2} The MCORR application requires submitting documentation and undergoing an onsite inspection prior to certification or recertification. Certification periods are not to exceed two years.

The MCORR process as it currently exists has not ensured quality or safety in recovery residences. In Baltimore City, there have been frequent reports of unsafe environments at recovery residences and a lack of responsiveness to community and resident concerns, some of which have been reported in the press. There are also reports of the required onsite inspections failing to occur. In addition, many recovery residences do not allow for the storage and continued use of medications for opioid use disorder and are actively hostile towards this effective treatment modality.

SB 878 is an important opportunity to establish new oversight and quality assurance expectations at certified recovery residences. BHSB supports the proposal to conduct unannounced inspections to ensure compliance and offers a friendly amendment to strengthen the inspection process and ensure feasibility:

Replace Section 19–2502.1(A)(1) with the following (additions and changes are **bolded**):

*The Department **or its designee** shall conduct at least **one** unannounced on-site inspection of each certified recovery residence each **certification period, which is not to exceed two years**. The inspection shall ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements **including but not limited to staffing, services, and policies to allow residents’ to safely continue prescribed medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder while residing at the recovery residence.***

The proposed amendment language aims to accomplish several goals. To make the bill more feasible, it reduces the number of unannounced inspections to at least one per certification period. This would normally be one every two years but could be more frequent if the certification period was shorter due to compliance concerns. The Department currently struggles to complete required certification inspections so a less frequent inspection schedule would make implementation more feasible while still holding recovery residences accountable. The amendment also improves feasibility by allowing the Department to delegate the inspections to a designee, presumably a local behavioral health authority such as BHSB. The last portion of the amendment is intended to clarify that the inspection should address the comprehensive set of regulatory requirements, including allowing medication for opioid use disorder.

By enacting SB 878 and adopting these proposed amendments, Maryland can better ensure high-quality recovery residences for all who need them. **We urge the Senate Finance Committee to pass SB 878.**

For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142

Endnotes:

¹ Maryland Certification of Recovery Residences available at: <https://health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/Maryland-Certification-of-Recovery-Residence-License-.aspx>

² National Alliance for Recovery Residences 2018 Quality Standards available at https://narronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/NARR_Standard_V.3.0_release_11-2018.pdf