



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

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HB 965

DATE: February 25, 2026

SPONSOR: Delegate Woorman, *et al.*

ASSIGNED TO: Health

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey

(leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS (Department of Health and Human Services)

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### Office of Health Care Quality Stakeholder Advisory Council – Establishment

House Bill 965 establishes the Office of Health Care Quality Stakeholder Advisory Council (the Council) to provide feedback to the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) on maintaining oversight of health care facilities; notify the Secretary of Health if OHCQ is negligent in providing oversight; hold public meetings every six months; and produce annual reports to the Governor and General Assembly on findings and recommendations.

While the Council established by the bill will play a similar role to other bodies that oversee aspects of OHCQ's work (ex. Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted-Living Facilities, Maryland Health Care Commission), House Bill 965 nonetheless is important to remedying OHCQ's transparency and workload issues that have troubled stakeholders over recent years. Notably, OHCQ's staffing shortages and inspection backlogs; long-standing delays in nursing home inspections, complaint investigations, and enforcement actions, especially during and after the COVID 19 epidemic; limited transparency of OHCQ's performance metrics including response times, complaint resolution, and inspection frequency; lack of structured stakeholder input, especially from residents, frontline workers, and community organizations; and growing public concern about quality and safety in nursing homes and hospitals all contribute to the need for the Council and data reporting required by House Bill 965.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services requests the following amendments to strengthen the benefits of House Bill 965: 1) include representation on the Council from the Maryland Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, which plays a crucial role in resolving complaints from residents of the State's Long Term Care facilities; 2) require disaggregated data reporting from OHCQ, including on race, ethnicity, language spoken, and disability status of complaint-maker, and location of OHCQ activities; 3) stipulate response times from OHCQ to Council feedback; and 4) **ensure that data reported by OHCQ to the Council is readily, publicly, and permanently available.**

We respectfully urge the committee to adopt the above amendments and issue a favorable report on House Bill 965.