



Testimony on **HB965**

Office of Health Care Quality Stakeholder Advisory Council - Establishment

Position: FAV

To Chair Bagnall and Members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones and I am the Political Director for 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East in Maryland and Washington, DC. 1199 is the largest healthcare workers union in the nation, representing 10,000 members in our region across the care continuum – hospitals, nursing homes, and federally qualified health centers.

We support HB965 because in a time where we are experiencing devastating healthcare cuts, we must work to uphold quality of care and hold healthcare facilities accountable. It has always been patients and healthcare workers sounding the alarm when facilities make fiscal decisions that diminish quality of care. Our nursing home members know that in Maryland our nursing homes experience a churn of new owners and with each change, the first decision owners make is to cut staff leaving facilities understaffed to care for vulnerable seniors needing more care.

If passed, SB240 would ensure healthcare workers and consumers can share their expertise as part of the advisory council. This will make it easier to identify where oversight of our facilities is falling short. The Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) oversees licensing, certifying, and surveying of Maryland healthcare facilities including hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, residential service agencies, and other long term care facilities.

We urge this committee to think of Maryland's most vulnerable who may be enduring subpar care due to lack of oversight. Please vote YES on HB 965 for more transparency within OHCQ and an inclusive advisory council.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones
Political Director
1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East