



Bill: HB 965 - Office of Health Care Quality Stakeholder Advisory Council - Establishment

Committee: House Health Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: February 25, 2026

On behalf of the 127,200 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's disease and the many others with another type of dementia, the Alzheimer's Association supports HB 965. This bill establishes the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) Stakeholder Advisory Council, creating a forum for transparency and engagement to discuss the oversight of health care facilities including hospitals, long-term care facilities, and adult day care.

Marylanders living with dementia who reside in long-term care facilities depend on stable, high-quality care environments and robust oversight systems. In recent years, Maryland's oversight of long-term care facilities has experienced significant failures. A 2024 federal class-action lawsuit¹ found that 181 nursing facilities, representing 81.5% of Maryland's licensed nursing homes, went at least 16 months without a required inspection, and more than 100 facilities went four years without an annual inspection. During the same period, OHCQ received approximately 13,173 complaints and facility-reported incidents but investigated fewer than half.

For individuals living with dementia, who may be unable to recognize or report mistreatment, these lapses in oversight can have devastating and irreversible consequences. When oversight systems fail, risks escalate resulting in preventable injuries, malnutrition, untreated medical conditions, dangerous wandering, and increased exposure to abuse in care settings.

While state officials have made progress in reducing inspection backlogs and improving regulatory performance, this follows years of systemic breakdowns that eroded public trust. HB 965 represents a commitment to strengthen quality and establish a culture of accountability within the oversight system. By bringing stakeholders together, the OHCQ Stakeholder Advisory Council will help ensure ongoing transparency, provide constructive feedback to the agency, and elevate issues before they lead to systemic failure. Most importantly, this Council will help protect residents in long-term care who are least able to safeguard themselves and most dependent on the State to fulfill its oversight responsibilities.

For these reasons, the Alzheimer's Association urges a favorable report on HB 965. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org with any questions.

¹ *Complaint: Maryland Department of Health—Office of Health Care Quality oversight failures.*
<https://justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/1-MD-Complaint.pdf>