



Date: February 23, 2026

Hearing Date: February 25, 2026

Committee: Finance

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

Position: In Support and Request Favorable Report

Submitted by:

Ruth Carlock

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Our organization:

The Brain Injury Association of Maryland (BIAMD) is a 42-year-old organization providing education, advocacy, and research. We operate an information & assistance hotline, work with over 100 clients in case management, host a yearly conference on brain injury, and advocate for policies that improve the life of Marylander's living with Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) and Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI). We are writing in SUPPORT of this bill.

Rationale:

Good evening, everyone, my name is Ruth Carlock, the Legislative Liaison at the Brain Injury Association of Maryland and am here in support of HB 965.

This bill would collect a diverse team of Maryland's healthcare leaders and designated politicians with frontline hospital workers, nursing home workers, healthcare advocates, and those in the care of these organizations, several times a year to complete a public

meeting to develop recommendations to improve the quality of nursing home and hospital care in Maryland. This change would add greater public feedback and accountability to the process with public meetings focused on reporting the number of hospital monitoring, nursing home inspection, hospital patient complaints, and code violations. These biannual meetings would help build trust that has been lost by the ongoing issues of these healthcare industries.

According to data from 2024, Maryland currently has the longest wait times in the country. Some Marylanders drive for hours to other states/DC for emergency hospital care. Nursing Homes have seen a consistent decline in quality among those living in a nursing facility as more people are needing care. With the need for services only increasing over the coming years with a rapidly aging retirement population.

Currently, The Office of Health Care Quality has seen issues keeping up with the demand for improving health care quality, and this bill will help return the vital oversight function to improve the declining quality of care in Maryland.

As a case manager at the Brain Injury Association of Maryland, my clients come directly from nursing homes and hospitalizations. A client I've been working with for years recently placed in a nursing home has experienced neglect, minimal oversight, and a lack of transparency in getting information to his healthcare teams and family. These are issues we see frequently among TBIs survivors and their advocates, many desperate to get them out of these nursing homes unable to meet their complex demands.

Given the ongoing healthcare quality challenges in Maryland. The establishment of the Stakeholder Advisory Council is a necessary step in providing constructive feedback and advice to push healthcare in the right direction. We ask that you render a favorable report for House Bill 965. Thank you.

References:

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"Pages - Office of Health Care Quality." *Maryland.gov Enterprise Agency Template*, health.maryland.gov/ohcq/Pages/home.aspx.

Palmisano, Anna. "Safe Staffing Committees Can Reduce Maryland's Lengthy ER Wait Times - Maryland Matters." *Maryland Matters*, 12 July 2025, marylandmatters.org/2025/07/12/safe-staffing-committees-can-reduce-marylands-lengthy-er-wait-times/.

Simms, Barry. "Ombudsman on Maryland Nursing Homes: 'We Are Concerned.'" *WBAL*, WBAL, 8 July 2024, www.wbaltv.com/article/nursing-home-conditions-maryland-ombudsman-concerned/61535157.