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HB 965 - Office of Health Care Quality Stakeholder Advisory Council - Establishment
House Health Committee
February 25, 2026
FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the House Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 965, which establishes a Stakeholder Advisory Council to support the work of the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ). AARP Maryland thanks Delegates Woorman, Alston, Boyce, Guzzone, Kaufman, Tomlinson, Wolek, and Wu for sponsoring this legislation.

My name is Sara Westrick, Advocacy Director for AARP Maryland, one of the largest membership-based organizations in the state, with approximately 850,000 members.

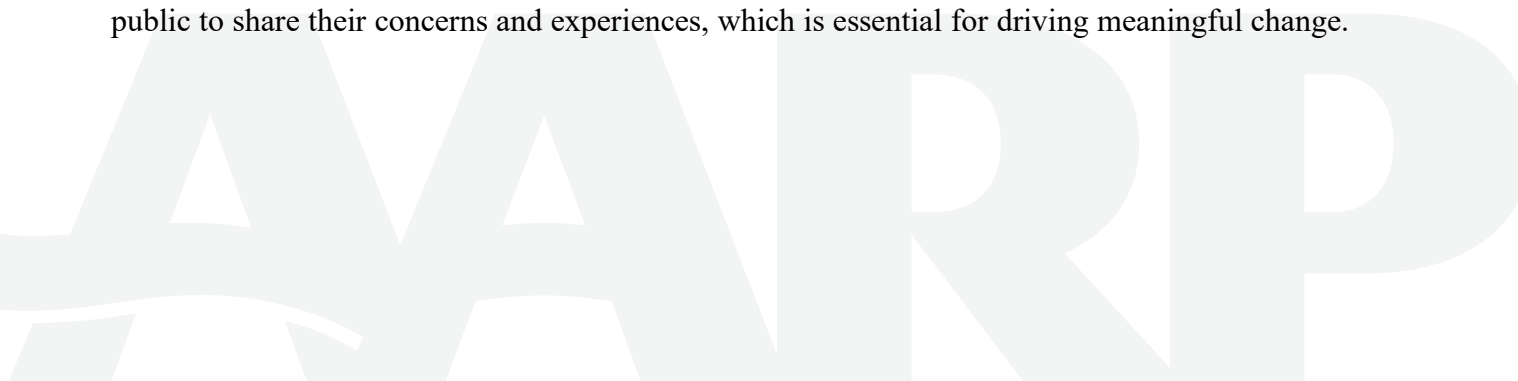
OHCQ plays a vital role in overseeing the quality of care provided in our state's health care facilities. HB 965 takes a crucial step toward enhancing OHCQ's effectiveness by creating a stakeholder advisory council that will provide valuable feedback and recommendations to the office.

Why AARP Maryland Supports HB 965

The advisory council, comprising diverse stakeholders, such as frontline hospital workers, nursing home residents, industry representatives, and advocacy groups, including AARP Maryland, will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the table. By periodically engaging with these stakeholders, OHCQ will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and concerns faced by health care providers, patients, and families, ultimately leading to more informed decision-making and better outcomes.

We are particularly pleased that the advisory council will focus on reviewing OHCQ data reports, compiling feedback from its members, and developing recommendations to improve the quality of nursing home and hospital care. This data-driven approach will enable the council to identify areas of concern and provide targeted suggestions for improvement.

In addition, having the advisory council hold virtual public meetings every six months will provide opportunities for public comment, helping build transparency and accountability with OHCQ. This will not only foster trust among stakeholders but also provide a platform for the public to share their concerns and experiences, which is essential for driving meaningful change.



We also appreciate the provision that requires the advisory council to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly annually. This will ensure that the Council's work is actionable, with recommendations for follow-up.

We believe that HB 965 has the potential to significantly improve the effectiveness of OHCQ and, ultimately, the quality of care provided in our state's health care facilities.

AARP Maryland respectfully urges a **favorable report** on HB 965.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick at swestrick@aarpm.org or by calling 410-310-0374.