

**PUBLIC
JUSTICE
CENTER**

Building a Just Society



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HB965: Office of Health Care Quality Stakeholder Advisory Council – Establishment
House Health Committee, February 25, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Health and Benefits Equity Project advocates to protect and expand access to healthcare and safety net services for Marylanders struggling to make ends meet. We support policies and practices that are designed to eliminate economic and racial inequities and enable every Marylander to attain their highest level of health. **The PJC supports HB965, which would increase oversight of Maryland’s healthcare system.**

Maryland’s Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) is entrusted with ensuring that Maryland patients receive adequate care and with investigating complaints of abuse and neglect in Maryland healthcare facilities. Yet, OHCQ has not been able to fulfill its mandate. **Maryland has historically ranked among the worst states in timely oversight of nursing facilities**, with the most recently available public data ranking Maryland #42 out of 51 states and D.C.¹ Although OHCQ testified that it has improved on the backlog for nursing facilities, whether that improvement can be sustained for nursing facilities or improved for assisted living programs and other institutions remains to be seen.

HB965 would allow patients, frontline workers, and advocates to provide feedback to OHCQ on how to improve oversight of Maryland healthcare facilities. Importantly, HB965 would also provide the public with ongoing data about the number of complaints received and resolved by OHCQ, and the average length of time it took OHCQ to respond to complaints. Increasing accountability for timely investigations is essential to addressing unsafe conditions. When investigations are late, it can lead to patients being exposed to additional harm, evidence can be lost, and redress can become harder to achieve. Public accountability is a vital step towards better protecting Maryland patients.

For these reasons, the PJC **SUPPORTS HB965** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report. Should you have any questions, please call Sam Williamson at 410-625-9409 ext. 234.

¹ StarPro, *Outdated Survey List*, <https://getstarpro.com/old-survey-list/> (last checked February 20, 2026).