



TESTIMONY TO THE HEALTH COMMITTEE

HB0965: Office of Health Care Quality Stakeholder Advisory Council- Establishment

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters believes that every Maryland resident should have access to affordable, quality health care, including long-term care, that also protects patients' rights. It thus supports House Bill 965, which would establish a Stakeholder Advisory Council for the Office of Health Care Quality.

Vulnerable Marylanders living in long-term care facilities rely on the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) to provide pro-active oversight and monitoring to ensure quality care. While the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) mandates periodic health inspections of nursing homes, in recent years Maryland has not performed these in a timely manner. According to StarPro, which tracks data on nursing homes across the U.S., as of 1/14/26 Maryland ranks #42 out of 51 states and D.C.¹ in on-time Standard Surveys. **This lack of active, timely oversight puts patients at risk.**

In 2025 a class-action lawsuit was filed against the Maryland Department of Health on behalf of the thousands of nursing home residents in the state. A federal judge ruled that the suit could proceed, alleging "a chain of causation between MDH's oversight and enforcement failures and Plaintiffs' particularized and unique injuries and risks as mobility-impaired residents of nursing facilities,"²

An OHCQ Stakeholder Advisory Council would help to restore trust in this important state health care agency by providing diverse perspectives and constructive feedback from a varied group of stakeholders, including nursing home residents and their families, front-line healthcare workers, patient care and disability advocates, state legislators, and healthcare administrators. The League and its 2,000 members urge the committee to give a favorable report to House Bill 965.

¹ <https://getstarpro.com/old-survey-list/#MD>

² <https://marylandmatters.org/2025/05/01/judge-says-lawsuit-against-health-department-can-proceed-over-missed-nursing-home-inspections/#:~:text=Brown%20%2D%20May%201%2C%202025%201,advocacy%20groups%20leading%20the%20lawsuit.>