

Marylanders for Patient Rights

Maryland House Health Committee

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

Position: Favorable

Organization: Marylanders for Patient Rights, Rockville, Maryland

Hearing Date: February 25, 2026

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Dr. Brooke Rossheim—I'm a Maryland-licensed physician with training and real-world practice experience in the areas of Public Health and General Preventive Medicine, Internal Medicine, and Geriatric Medicine. I am board-certified in Public Health and General Preventive Medicine and Internal Medicine. I serve as the Senior Medical Advisor for Marylanders for Patient Rights, the largest patient advocacy organization in the state. This written testimony is submitted in support of HB965.

For years, it has been reported and noted that the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) was not conducting routine mandatory nursing home (NH) inspections, and resident complaints were not addressed within mandated time frames.

The Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC) created by HB965 addresses OHCQ's issues and achieves goals that will benefit hospitals, NHs, and their patients. First, the SAC provides a diverse array of healthcare experts including frontline clinical staff, a physician, hospital and NH administrators, and external stakeholders to review OHCQ data. For complete discussions about this information and OHCQ policies, people with different perspectives need to be at the table. Participants can provide real-world information that data may not describe well or even be available about. Council meetings will be public via the internet and a public comment period will be provided. This process allows more Marylanders to access and become engaged in this important issue.

Second, HB965 provides needed transparency and accountability about OHCQ's operations and performance. Patient health and safety depend on OHCQ carrying out its mission competently, and Marylanders have a right to know if this is the case. If OHCQ is negligent, the SAC has a responsibility to notify the Secretary of Health. Maryland and the federal government compile state healthcare metrics that are publicly available; therefore, this practice is not new. Public datasets are deidentified; therefore, privacy is maintained.

Third, the SAC is not a regulatory body. It doesn't have the power to mandate that OHCQ take specific actions. Its goal is to assist and oversee OHCQ by providing a diverse set of recommendations about policies or operations for its consideration.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage the House Health Committee to vote favorably on HB965. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Brooke Rossheim, M.D., M.P.H.

Senior Medical Advisor, Marylanders for Patient Rights

www.marylandpatientrights.org
