



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

December 15, 2023

The Honorable Wes Moore
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President
Senate of Maryland
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne Jones
Speaker
Maryland House of Delegate
State House, H-101
Annapolis, Maryland, 21401

Re: Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities
Annual Report

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to Health General Article § 19-1409 (j), we submit the required annual report of the Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities for activity from January to December 2023. I chair this committee and it met five times during 2023.

Please contact MDOA Legislative Director Andrea Nunez, andrea.nunez@maryland.gov or 410-414-8183 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Carmel Roques
Secretary

The Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities (the “Committee”) met five times in 2023 with newly appointed Secretary Roques as the chair. Meetings were held virtually from 12:30-2:30 pm on April 5, July 19, October 11, November 15 and December 6, 2023.

Secretary Roques set the expectation that the oversight committee would become familiar with the federal report on nursing home quality and the ongoing work of the Moving Forward Coalition¹ to execute on those recommendations. The Moving Forward Coalition provided a framework for the committee to discuss opportunities for Maryland to improve quality. In addition, Secretary Roques urged the committee to consider the best practices in design and culture change and to seek a path forward for Maryland to implement some of these best practices. To that end, the Committee will receive a report in the upcoming year from the Center for Innovation to help guide recommendations.

The Committee received presentations from:

- Susan Ryan, CEO of the Greenhouse Project within the Center for Innovation, who discussed culture and physical design changes in nursing care facilities.
- Stacey Howes, Ph.D., CPHQ, Chief, Long Term Care and Health Plan Quality Initiatives, Maryland Health Care Commission
- Jarrod Terry, Administrator, Division of Long Term Care Services, Office of Long Term Services and Supports, Maryland Department of Health. Mr. Terry’s report served as the required annual reporting delivered on behalf of the Maryland Department of Health’s Deputy Secretary of Health Care Financing on the status of the Medicaid Nursing Facility Reimbursement System.
- Carol Fenderson, Deputy Director, State Programs, Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), Maryland Department of Health. Ms. Fenderson’s report served as the required annual report from OHCQ on the status of quality of care in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- Leonard Croft, MDOA staff who is the lead staff liaison to the new state elder abuse task force. Leonard provided an update on the status of appointments, its chair, the initially formed subcommittees and the body’s first meeting on December 16th, 2023.

¹ Available at: <https://movingforwardcoalition.org/>

The Committee held other significant discussions on:

- Mandatory staffing rules and their impact on the nursing care industry.
- The direct care workforce shortage, noting that recent state minimum wage increases will help generally, but not solve.
- Transparency of ownership in nursing facilities.
- OHCQ's licensing role, licensing requirements, the COVID-19 pandemic and their impact on nursing and assisted living facilities.
- State legislation that individual member organizations, including AARP, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, the Maryland Association of Adult Daycare Services (MAADS) are supporting in advance of the 2024 legislative session, for the group's awareness.
- The status of state law and regulations impacting assisted living facilities and training requirements.
 - At the December 6th meeting, members noted a key multiyear priority of the Oversight Committee had been to get updated regulations on nursing home facilities and assisted living. As the state's nursing home regulations were last updated in 2019, members' focus has shifted towards the new assisted living regulations. OHCQ staff confirmed the new assisted living regulations will be introduced soon and out for public comment in 2024.

Committee Recommendation: Maryland should pursue opportunities to support efforts to increase transparency of ownership, information, data, and availability for consumers, following recommendations and guidelines proposed by the Moving Forward Coalition.