



MDH ATTENDEES: Laura Herrera Scott, MD, MPH, Secretary
Dr. Nilesh Kalyanaraman, Deputy Secretary, Public Health
Tia Witherspoon-Udocox, Executive Director, OHCQ
Amalie Brandenburg, MDH Chief Financial Officer

Available For Questions: TBD

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Office of Health Care Quality
Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

House Appropriations Committee
Health and Social Services Subcommittee
Delegate Emily Shetty
February 13, 2025

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Health and Human Services Subcommittee
Senator Cory McCray
February 17, 2025

The Department thanks the Governor, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and the Budget Committees for their support. We thank the Department of Legislative Services for its insightful budget analysis.

OHCQ should comment on whether the added position has been filled (p. 2).

This Nurse Surveyor position was filled effective October 2, 2024.

OHCQ should provide the average and maximum time elapsed between surveys of nursing homes in fiscal 2024 and 2025 year to date (p. 10).

The average interval time between surveys for FY 2024 was 37.5 months and has decreased by 21% to date to 29.6 months in FY 2025. While the maximum time between surveys has not significantly changed yet, at 61 months in FY 2024 and 63 months in FY25, based on the current curvy clearance rate, we anticipate this coming down significantly in the next few months. Of note, the number of completed annual surveys has increased substantially, from 47 completed surveys within FY 2024, to 77 completed through the first seven months of FY 2025.

OHCQ should clarify the source for special funds supporting the nurse surveyor contracts and discuss how these funds will be added to the Budget (p. 15).

The source of the special funds is the State Civil Money Penalty fund. The OHCQ may impose a civil money penalty on long-term care facilities that violate Maryland regulations. The funds may be used to support programs that improve the quality of care. The Department will work with the Department of Management and Budget to bring these funds into the budget as needed.

Considering the total cost of salaries for 72 State employee nurse surveyor positions is \$6.8 million, and the contracts awarded only provide a range of 5 to 13 nurse surveyors per week for a total of \$5.6 million, OHCQ should comment on the cost effectiveness of the subcontractor nurse surveyors compared to full-time nurse surveyor positions (p. 15).

Using certified nurse surveyor subcontractors provides immediate ability to conduct survey activity. Since at least 2019, every surveyor hired into OHCQ has not had the necessary certification to survey and has had to go through 12 months of training to get certification. As the 12 surveyors added in FY 2025 go through training and become certified, they will be able to bring down the backlog even faster, eventually eliminating the need for contract surveyors. Without the contract surveyors, it would have taken an additional year, while surveyors became certified, to get meaningful traction on the backlog.