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**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE**

*Mission Statement*

On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the mission of the **Public Health and Environment Committee** is dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of Baltimore's residents by advancing policies that promote health equity, environmental justice, and sustainability. Recognizing the deep connection between public health and the environment, the committee works to reduce health disparities, improve access to essential services, and address climate-related challenges that impact communities.

**The Honorable Phylicia Porter  
Chair**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026  
10:00 AM**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**RECONVENING HEARING**

*Legislative Oversight #LO25-0007*

**Behavioral Health**

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*Staff: Ethan Navarre (Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov)*

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# CITY OF BALTIMORE

Brandon M. Scott – Mayor  
Zeke Cohen – Council President



## Office of Council Services

Nancy Mead - Director  
100 Holliday Street, Room 415  
Baltimore, MD 21202

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### BILL SYNOPSIS

**Committee: Public Health and Environment**

**Legislative Oversight: LO25-0007**

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### Behavioral Health

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**Sponsor:** *Councilmember Porter, et al*

**Introduced:** *January 27, 2025*

**Purpose:**

**For the purpose** reviewing Baltimore City’s capacity to respond to increasing behavioral health challenges, including Baltimore City Health Department staff, data-based evaluation and reporting, alignment of City-funded non-City entities, and the visibility of pro-behavioral health efforts.

Effective: Upon enactment.

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**Partners and/or Organizations that have been invited:**

- **Representative(s) from Behavioral Health Systems Baltimore**

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### Analysis

#### Background

The committee held hearings on March 8<sup>th</sup> and September 10, 2025, on this legislative topic. Following are notes taken during the September 10th hearing:

#### Major Speakers

- Public Testimony/Speakers
    - Darci Curwen-Garber, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
    - Candy Kerr, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
    - Dr. Steve Daviss, Baltimore City Medical Society
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- Speakers from the Behavioral Health System Baltimore
  - Crista Taylor
  - Dan Rabitt
  - Adrienne Breidenstine

## **Major Issues Discussed**

1. Chairwoman Porter gave opening remarks and stated, “This hearing is one of a series of scheduled oversight hearings. We look forward to continuing working with non-governmental agencies; taking a robust approach and looking at the quality of care offered. We will discuss some of the COMAR regulations today that pertains to this issue.”
2. President Cohen also gave opening remarks and stated, “This is an extremely important issue. Other related hearings will be and/or are held in our Committee of the Whole.”
3. Public Testimony was taken (approximately three [3] speakers). Some comments, topics of discussion and/or concerns were:
  - Concerns and/or Comments:
    - It can be confusing for people to know where to go for help!
    - Some of the issues people are experiencing are:
      - Health issues
      - Addiction, and
      - Services available
    - As a medical doctor, I have seen many problems!
      - Much more interaction with the government is needed
      - More data is needed
      - Will be attending other scheduled meetings the committee has in the future!
4. After public testimony, Chairwoman Porter gave some remarks regarding the importance of holding Providers accountable and for tying things together. She also told Dr. Daviss that she would like to connect with him sometime in the future.
5. The representatives from the Behavioral Health System Baltimore gave a PowerPoint Presentation. **A copy is on file.** Some topics discussed and presented in the PowerPoint Presentation were:
  - COMAR revisions
  - Pause on Medicaid Providers, and
  - Importance of Providers being held accountable for services provided
6. Committee/council members asked questions, stated concerns, and made comments. Some highlighted topics of discussion, comments and/concerns were:
  - Agreement to Cooperate
    - How are you ensuring the non-continuation of “over saturation?”
  - Community Needs Assessment
    - A scope is needed for the assessment
    - And it would be helpful!
  - Corrective Action Plans
    - What happens when these plans are not followed?
    - Connecting the dots because you can’t just shut facilities down!
  - Complaints from Residents
    - Too many facilities in location; not wanted in neighborhoods
    - Facility(s) that do not run properly!
    - Concern: “bad actors”

- How can we build-in a greater ability for accountability?
  - Concern: more accountability is needed
  - What do you think are some of the things and/or ways that can be used to judge the quality of facilities and care? Such as: services provided, indicators and/or outcomes?
  - Medicaid Fraud
    - How do you handle these complaints?
    - Do you have the ability to shut things down after an investigation?
  - Zoning – C1 – Commercial
    - Registered Facilities (new clinics)
      - Are you working with Providers on where they will be located? **Answer: No**
      - Concern: changing certification after getting location
        - We need to discuss this issue, so the community doesn't believe they were lied too!
        - We need to get on the front-end of this issue, especially with the revision of COMAR!
      - R8 Districts also need to be included in the assessment (parking regulations)
      - The goal is to make Baltimore City thrive for every resident!
  - Concern: Facilities not following the building codes
  - Regulations
    - Where can the Council be helpful with updating the Regulations? We would like a “seat at the table.”
    - We need to know who to call to get involved. **Suggestion made by one of the attendees: Send a letter from the Council.**
      - Per Chairwoman Porter: “We will write that letter!”
      - Per Committee member Ramos: I would like to work with Chairwoman Porter to produce that letter prior to the Regulations coming out!
  - Timeline for Medicaid Reimbursement
    - Remind us of when and/or how long the moratorium was extended.
  - Application for new Providers – talk about this process
7. Chairwoman Porter gave closing remarks, “We will continue having conversations and she informed the public to “feel free to contact her office.” Hearing recessed.

On Wednesday, April 1, 2026, the committee will continue (reconvene) [its series of scheduled hearings](#) surrounding this topic.

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### Additional Information

**Fiscal Note:** None

**Information Source(s):** Notes taken during September 10, 2025, committee hearing.

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*Marguerite Currin*

Analysis by: Marguerite Currin  
 Analysis Date: March 30, 2026

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