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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, JULY 22, 2026
10:00 AM**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

RECONVENING HEARING

Legislative Oversight #LO25-0024

**Oversight of Recovery Homes and Substance Abuse
Clinics in Baltimore City**

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Zeke Cohen – Council President



Office of Council Services

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

BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Public Health and Environment

Legislative Oversight: LO25-0024

Oversight of Recovery Homes and Substance Abuse Clinics in Baltimore City

RECONVENING HEARING

Sponsor: Councilmembers Porter, et al

Introduced: June 16, 2025

Purpose:

For the purpose of ensuring that individuals in recovery have access to high-quality, safe, and well-regulated recovery homes and substance abuse clinics is critical. To evaluate existing policies, assess provider accountability, and explore opportunities to enhance support systems for individuals in recovery. The discussion will prioritize community concerns, patient safety, and equitable distribution of recovery resources across the city.

Effective: Upon enactment.

Agencies, Partners and/or Organizations that have been invited:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavioral Health Systems Baltimore• Department of Housing and Community Development |
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Analysis

Background

On Wednesday, April 29, 2026, the committee held its **third hearing** on this legislative topic. Following are notes from the hearing:

Major Speakers

- Dr. Trevor Clark, Morgan State University
 - Dan Rabbitt, Behavioral Health System – Baltimore (BHSB)
 - Adrienne Breidenstine, Behavioral Health System – Baltimore (BHSB)
 - Jason Wright, Department of Housing and Community Development
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- Shea Beitler-Akman, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Public Testimony/Speakers
 - Kim Wireman, Powell Recovery Center, Inc
 - Brittany Grey, Speaker

Major Issues Discussed

1. Chairwoman Porter called the hearing to order.
2. Public Testimony was received from (two [2] speakers). Some comments, topics of discussion and/or concerns were:
 - A speaker asked what is the definition for Recovery Homes?
 - The draft COMAR is moving in the right direction
 - Complaints must be handled appropriately, steering clients in the right direction
 - Telehealth needs attention
 - Robust outcome tracking is needed
 - Retention concerns
 - Quality services must be measured
3. Dr. Clark testified, gave a PowerPoint Presentation. **A copy is on file.**
4. At the conclusion of Dr. Clark's testimony, Chairwoman Porter explained why she had invited Dr. Clark to the committee hearing. She also talked about his dissemination work in this area. She also made several comments, such as:
 - About recovery homes, substance abuse and mental health clinics being disproportionately placed in black and brown communities
 - The need for efficient and effective treatment
 - About quality treatment, quality services and collaboration
 - Data received and/or available on State level
 - Working with private partners
 - Comment: Baltimore has a real opportunity to change our behavior health climate; not just through zoning but through enforcement too
5. A representative from BHSB gave a PowerPoint Presentation, **A copy is on file**
6. At the conclusion of Mr. Rabbitt's testimony, Chairwoman Porter gave comments, such as:
 - Organized Data
 - Happy data is now available per district so we can see what is happening
 - The data will help to track problematics facilities within district(s)
 - Data will help with the data available on the State level and will help the City Council too!
 - In light of the new data coming from ASO activities, BHSB, how are your reorganizing processes as it relates to Use and Occupancy, fire, reasonable accommodation when looking at City's procedures?
 - Is there any coordination between DHCD and BHSB?
 - **Committee Request by Chairwoman Porter: To BHSB:**
 - **Provide: How many unlicensed Recovery Homes facilities do we have in the City?**
 - **Are there any transition opportunities for those unlicensed recovery houses to become licensed? And what is the timeline for same?**
 - **Provide: Who at the State level is responsible for the timeline.**
7. Committee/council members asked questions, stated concerns, and made comments. Some highlighted topics of discussion, comments and/concerns were:

- Question: Why wasn't the Deputy Commissioner from BCHD here today? The Deputy Commissioner has direct supervision over the Inspectors.
- Special Investigation Unit – SIU - Inspections
 - Monitoring data provided by SIU regarding properties
 - The Zoning Administrator issues “reasonable accommodations!” It appears to be a gap in the permits issued to residential recovery homes and the number of people allowed. There are no inspection periods to ensure the number of people does not exceed same.
 - Is there a reason why there are no inspections?
 - It could be life and death situations if we don't inspect!
 - Committee requests from Member Torrence and Chairwoman Porter:
 - Are we looking at ways to being pro-active with Inspections? (Health, Safety and Sanitation concerns) – Request: To be able to meet with the Deputy Commission, DHCD, to discuss this matter offline.
 - Also, we like the I-Team to take over this process.
- New Class of Properties - Supportive Housing Facilities
 - Committee request(s) from Member Ramos:
 - Provide a list of the new houses/facilities that now fall into this new class.
 - Properties listed as “Reasonable Accommodation”
 - Updates are needed and some properties need to come off list!
 - Provide a list of these types of properties.
- Issuing Permits
 - Requested by Member Torrence:
 - I would like the following to be tracked: (if possible)
 - For people who request permits, do they receive payments for housing through Medicaid? Medicare? Or whoever is paying for it!
 - Suggestion: During the permit process, place a question pertaining to same on the application process.
- Zoning for Properties
 - Categories surrounding housing are:
 - Residential care facilities
 - Clinics, and
 - Hospitals
 - Does every type of program that was listed and talked about today fall into the local zoning code in one of the 3 categories? **Answer: Yes**
 - Requested by Councilmember Blanchard:
 - Of all the different types of uses that were presented today, please provide which falls into:
 - Residential care facilities
 - Clinics
 - Hospitals
 - And compare the data to Baltimore and Montgomery Counties
 - Comment: It would be good to see how other large counties that have used like this; how it works in their Zoning Codes!
- Current Pause on IOP's, PHP,s and PRP's Enrollment - BHSB
 - Baltimore City: Where are they being directed for treatment with the pause in place?
 - Is there a documented unmet need for treatment providers in the city?

- Concern: Influx of people needing services
- Who determines need?
- Access – “We don’t need more, we don’t need additional, we need better quality!”
- We need connectivity and access to the current providers! And we need to remove those providers that we know are not good!
- Communication Connectivity: BHSB, BMZA and DHCD should be talking with each other! And everybody should be talking with the State!
- Improved Coordination with ASO’s and LBHA’s – to BHSB
 - Is there an opportunity for the quarterly data to be segmented by council district? To give the council members the opportunity to know what is going on in his/her district! **Per A. Breidenstine, will research and report back.**
- Ongoing Changes - Updated Regulations/State Law – to Dr. Clark
 - One of the Findings:
 - Fragmented Oversight increases the risk of early departure from treatment! Can you expand on what your sense of the current oversight system looks like, particularly where the gaps are and rather there is room for action?
 - Do you have any consideration from your findings for what some positive actions could be?
- Required Licensed for Facilities – before getting a permit
 - Comments made:
 - Regarding Certification
 - Importance of having good standards and high quality

8. Hearing recessed.

9. Further Study - Was further study requested? Yes. See highlights above in **“red and yellow.”**

On Wednesday, July 22, 2026, the committee will reconvene the hearing.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: None

Information Source(s): Notes taken during April 29, 2026, committee hearing.

Marguerite Currin

Analysis by: Marguerite Currin
Analysis Date: July 20, 2026

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**PUBLIC HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

LO25-0024

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**NONE RECEIVED AS OF THIS
WRITING**