



## HEARING NOTES

Legislative Oversight: LO25-0024

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

**Committee:** Public Health and Environment

**Chaired by:** Chairwoman Phylicia Porter

**Hearing Date:** Wednesday, July 30, 2025

**Time (Beginning):** 10:10 AM

**Time (Ending):** 12:10 PM

**Location:** Council Chambers

**Total Attendance:** Approximately 75 In-Person  
Approximately 30 Virtually

#### Committee Members in Attendance:

Phylicia Porter      Ryan Dorsey  
Mark Parker        John Bullock  
Odette Ramos       James Torrence  
Mark Conway

Bill Synopsis in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Attendance sheet in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Agency reports read. ....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Video or audio-digitally recorded? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a

#### Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Dan Rabbitt, Behavioral Health Systems – Baltimore
- Kim Wireman, Powell Recovery Center, Inc.
- Public Testimony/Speakers
  - Lisa Hodges-Hiken, Westport CEDC
  - Christine Flowers, Minister
  - Nick Thieve, Speaker

- Melissa Vale, Sinai Hospital
  - Dr. Ocelia Pearsall, New Life Recovery Center
  - Yolanda Pulley, People Empowered by the Struggle (PEBTS)
- 

### **Major Issues Discussed**

1. Chairwoman Porter gave opening remarks and stated, “We need an all-hands-on deck approach. This is the opportunity to have a conversation regarding the quality of services provided.”
2. Vice President Middleton also gave opening remarks and stated, “This is one of the most important issues to start conversations about! We must strengthen community trust.” Other topics of her discussion included:
  - The importance of having adequate clinics for recovery
  - We want a more resilient society!
  - Talked about the demographics of the 6<sup>th</sup> district – stating there are a lot of middle-class residents living there
  - As a result of the new laws, whereas the city had to accept group homes, the community associations became closer together!
  - She talked about some of the new organizations and stated, “there were drastic changes in the community as a result of the new organizations.
  - Talked about the impact that “deaths and addiction” have in families; affects a lot of families, she said.
    - Drug addiction is a disease, and it is affecting everyone!
  - Oversight is so, so important, she said!
    - There are some bad clinics out there!
    - The importance of educating the community
    - We must learn where the clinics are in order to manage our district(s)
    - Talked about the role of the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA)
3. President Zeke Cohen also gave opening remarks and stated, “We appreciate these series of hearings! This is a very complex issue to wrap our arms around! We cannot incarcerate our way out of this issue. We must wrap our arms around this issue! Other topics of discussion included:
  - Comments regarding “Predatory Businesses”
  - The importance of having residents living and thriving in the city.
4. Public Testimony was taken (approximately six [6] speakers). Some comments, topics of discussion and/or concerns were:
  - Concerns:
    - Open air drug market in Westport – is of concern and is mainly coming from people living in surrounding counties!
      - It affects the quality of life for residents!
    - Must make sure funding goes where it is needed! The right way through oversight!
    - We need better partnerships, collaboration, solutions and outcomes!
  - Comments:
    - Much prayer is needed!
    - Some clinics are exploiting their clients!
      - Those clinics must be investigated and shut down!
    - This is not just an agency(s) issue but an issue for the city as well.
    - Is a homeless specialist

- Knows how “deep” this issue goes!
    - There are challenges being homeless while getting treatment.
  - We need our “boots” on the ground to confront this issue!
  - Importance of data sharing
  - Importance of outreach
  - The representative from Sinai Hospital stated that she was in attendance to share information about their program at the hospital. She talked about:
    - Makeup of customers
      - Age, race, etc.
      - Importance of meeting people where they are
      - Accessibility of services is crucial!
      - The goal is - making the best decisions possible!
5. Each representative from both the Behavioral Health Administration Baltimore and the Powell Recovery Center, Inc. gave a PowerPoint Presentation. **Copies are on file.**
6. Committee/council members asked questions, stated concerns, and made comments. Some highlighted topics of discussion, comments and/concerns were:
- Equity and Quality
    - Chairwoman Porter explained why she asked Ms. Wireman to submit some recommendations
    - A committee member thanks Ms. Wireman for the recommendations and stated, “We want to make sure people on the front line are doing and/or is providing adequate services.”
  - Recovery Homes – must be licensed
    - Health and safety standards in those homes are very important!
      - Oversight
        - Explain what is certified versus non-certified – **Requested by Committee member Ramos: please submit the answer in writing.**
    - Concerns:
      - Clients get the proper services needed
      - Adequate licensing for all treatment centers
  - Clients Served
    - Do you have data for how many of the clients served in the city are actually city residents?
    - Do we have a sense of services the city is providing for clients living in surrounding counties?
    - **Requested by Councilmember Zac Blanchard: Provide a breakdown of the number of clients being served in city who live in the surrounding counties.**
  - Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Clinics
    - Talk about the programs you provide and how it fits into communities
    - Talk about community engagement and consideration
    - Language barriers
      - What barriers have you seen for getting treatment for the immigrant community?
  - Oversight – Bad and/or Illegal Clinics
    - Concern: There is a deep need for services in the City but a “quality of services provided” issue which makes drug issues worse. We don’t mind if quality clinics are opening within community! Most clients don’t know a good vs. bad clinic!

- Concern: Below standard clinics and addressing those illegal facilities
  - We must look into how the Council can help constituents in his/her district!
  - Having a clinic half block from an open-air drug market is not good!
  - There are not enough penalties for not being certified!
  - Those type clinics are “allowable but not desirable!”
  - What is considered an uncertified recovery home?
  - Suggestion: Would I be helpful if we (the community) begin to collect data on these illegal clinics? **Answer: Yes**

7. Chairwoman Porter gave closing remarks, “We must transform people to healing! This issue touches so many and it will take all of us to assist!”

8. Hearing recessed.

---

### Further Study

Was further study requested?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe.

1. See highlights above in “red.”

---

*Marguerite M. Currin*

Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff  
cc: Bill File

Date: August 5, 2025

# Baltimore City Council


## Committee Hearing Attendance Record

<b>Subject: <span style="color: red;">Legislative Oversight:</span></b> Oversight of Recovery Homes and Substance Abuse Clinics in Baltimore City	<b># LO25-0024</b>
<b>Committee:</b> Public Health and Environment	<b>Chair:</b> Phylicia Porter
<b>Date:</b> <span style="background-color: yellow;">Wednesday, July 30, 2025</span>	<b>Time:</b> 10:00 AM

**Location:** Council Chambers

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

**CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY**

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY				What is your position on this bill?	Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*			
<u>CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY</u>				 <b>Testify</b>	For	Against	Yes	No
First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email						
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minister Christina	Flowers	2524 N. Charles St Balti MD 21218		✓				
Nick Thieme	Thieme	Myself		✓				
Melissa Vale	Vale	SHARPS Sinai Hospital		✓				
Kim	Wireman	Pearall 14 S. Broadway		✓				
DR. Debra Pearall	Pearall	110 St Paul Street New Life Recovery Center		✓				
Dorothy	Edwards	Community Outreach ministry						

\*NOTE: IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD AS A LOBBYIST. REGISTRATION CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION VISIT: [HTTPS://ETHICS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV/](https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/) OR CALL: 410-396-4730

## Currin, Marguerite (City Council)

**From:** City of Baltimore <noreply@formresponse.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 29, 2025 3:56 PM  
**To:** Testimony  
**Subject:** Form submission from: Testify Before the Baltimore City Council

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of Baltimore City IT Network Systems.  
**Reminder:** DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. Report any suspicious activities using the Report Phishing Email Button, or by emailing to [Phishing@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Phishing@baltimorecity.gov)

### Testify Before the Baltimore City Council

On which bill would you like to testify?

LO25-0024 - Oversight of Recovery Homes and Substance Abuse Clinics in Baltimore City

Name

Lisa Hodges-Hiken

— She is,  
on-line

Affiliation

Westport CEDC

Email

[lisa@westportcedc.org](mailto:lisa@westportcedc.org)

Phone Number

(443) 621-6006

Address

2252 Sidney Avenue, Baltimore, MD, 21230

Position

Support

Type of Testimony

Oral

# City of Baltimore

City Council  
City Hall, Room 408  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Public Health & Environment Committee

---

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

10:00 AM Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall, Phone:  
#1-408-418-9388, Access code: 2330 005 8637, Password:  
Public, Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?MTID=m5c60262249c3b68ce163defde9374631)  
MTID=m5c60262249c3b68ce163defde9374631

---

#### LO25-0024 - Oversight of Recovery Homes and Substance Abuse Clinics in Baltimore City

#### CALL TO ORDER

#### INTRODUCTIONS

#### ATTENDANCE

Present 7 - Phylcia Porter, Mark Conway, Mark Parker, Ryan Dorsey, James Torrence, John Bullock, and Odette Ramos

#### ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

LO25-0024 Oversight of Recovery Homes and Substance Abuse Clinics in Baltimore  
City

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.

Hearing recessed.

#### ADJOURNMENT