

**The State Advisory Council on Serious Illness Care
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 16, 2026**

Members Present

Dr. Marian Grant, Chair
Dr. Lakshmi Vaidyanathan
Dr. Sadie Peters
Joanne Ogaitis
Meg LaMar
Cathy Hamel
Peggy Shimoda
Sabrina Chase
Dr. Danielle Doberman
Dr. Katheryne Walker
Brett Felter

Members Absent

Susan Lyons
Delegate Ashanti Martinez
Brian Mattingley
Senator Arthur Ellis
Dr. Kimmi Nkechi Upchurch
Liz Woodward
Katherine Ware
Dr. Dan Morhaim
Rabbi Stephen Glazer (term expired)
Gail Mansel (term expired)
Jane Markley (term expired)
Tiffany Chander Erbeling (term expired)
Dr. Shahid Aziz (term expired)
Christine Watts (term expired)
Elena Boisvert, Esq. (term expired)

Attendees (non-members)

Jessica Zan

1. Welcome and Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 23, 2026

- Welcomed by Chair, Dr. Marian Grant and minutes approved by council.

2. Legislative Updates

- Three key bills discussed and tracking by Peggy Shimoda
- Council agreed to send letters of support to legislation
- Bills without hearings are unlikely to advance this session

Palliative Care Services Bill, HB 1251

- Requires palliative care services in all Maryland health facilities
- Overall supportive of bill, concerns are:

- Very Expensive
- Operational challenges in nursing homes
- Duplication of services needs to be taken out
- May not pass this year but created awareness of the need for palliative care
- No accompanying bill in Senate
- Will continue to work with stakeholders on this bill

Hospice House Room and Board Bill, HR 1151/SB 611

- Proposes study impact on MD to pay for hospice residential room and board by Medicaid
- Updates:
 - Received favorable report in the House and moving to Senate for hearing
 - Supported by Maryland Hospital Association
 - Not supported by Dept of Health due to financial concerns
 - Will monitor Senate progress
 - Ensure testimony and support is available

Hospital Surrogate Decision Making Committee Bill HB 1323

- Requires hospitals to establish committees for patients without legal surrogates, reducing delays caused by court-appointed guardianship
- Discussion about the need for clear committee structure, decision-making and regulatory guidance, will they need ethics committee.
- Council will follow up with regulators should this pass this session to address those concerns.

3. Advance Care Planning Billing Code Maryland Medicaid Update

- Application submitted to Medicaid to add billing code service to Maryland Medicaid being reviewed
- CMS developed these codes in 2016 because these conversations are important and payment may promote them
- Decision expected in about 60 days, awaiting response
- The committee reviewing application asked a few council members to answer questions
- Committee lacked understanding that code is used by specialists in acute care settings and not just in primary care
- Minimal financial risk as likely small number of providers would use them, could be used with both children and elderly, could lead to deeper conversations with patients
- If approved, Council could assist with implementation. If not approved, we could reapply in another year after seeing what the reasons for the rejection were

4. Palliative Care Vision Update

- Will send latest draft to members for review (done)
- State seeking comments on possible proposed innovation funding for total cost of care AHEAD model. Seeking comments on new program, Health Outcomes Payment Effort (HOPE), comments due 3/25/26
- Potential funding for palliative care, hospice and advance care planning initiatives
- 2 HOPE categories: 1 run through hospitals and the other through hospital partners, serious illness care organizations can partner with hospitals
- Council supports in principle and recommends palliative care, advance care planning, and hospice to improve patient's outcomes and reduce costs

5. Council Membership Updates

- Application system is now operational, link active at <https://govappointments.maryland.gov/>
- 6 applicants are currently in process
- Remaining vacancies to be identified after those placements, will share updated membership list and track expiration dates
- Members, especially legal experts, are still needed

8. CMS Annual Quality Conference on 3/17/26

- There will be an advance care planning panel with Dr. Marian Grant, Dr. Dan Morhaim, Tiffany Eberlein
- There is an option for virtual attendance, and the panel will be recorded for later viewing

9. Next Meeting

- April 27, 2026, 2:30 – 3:30 pm

10. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM