

Rest Home Task Force

Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2025
10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Date of meeting: Friday, February 7, 2025

Start time: 10:30 am

End time: 12:00 pm

Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Member Attendance & Votes		Present	Vote 1*	Vote 2*
1	Kiame Mahaniah – Executive Office of Health and Human Services (<i>chair</i>)	X	X	X
2	Scune Carrington – Private practitioner, BennuCare	X	X	X
3	Kim Clougherty – Department of Mental Health (DMH)	X	X	X
4	Emily Cooper – Executive Office of Aging & Independence (EOAI)	X	X	X
5	Tracey Cravedi – Hale House	X	X	X
6	Steve Davis – Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality, DPH (<i>designee of Judy Bernice, who was unable to attend</i>)	X	-	X
7	Moses Dixon – Senior Connection	-	-	-
8	Pamela Edwards – Massachusetts Senior Action Council	X	X	X
9	Patricia Jehlen – Massachusetts Senate, Joint Committee on Elder Affairs	X	X	X
10	Megan Nicholls – Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)	X	X	X
11	Patrick O'Connor – Massachusetts Senate	X	X	-
12	Ron Pawelski – Massachusetts Association of Residential Care Homes (MARCH)	X	X	X
13	Thomas Stanley – MA House of Representatives, Joint Committee on Elder Affairs	X	X	X
14	Pavel Terpelets – Office of Long-Term Services and Supports (OLTSS), MassHealth	X	X	X
15	<i>Vacant – Appointee of House Minority Leader Jones Jr.</i>	-	-	-

* (X) Voted in favor; (O) Opposed; (A) Abstained from vote; (-) Absent from meeting or during vote

Proceedings

Undersecretary Mahaniah called the meeting to order at 10:30 am. He welcomed members and informed them that the Task Force meeting is subject to the Open Meeting Law and that any votes taken during the meeting would be conducted via roll-call vote.

He proposed that the first agenda item, the review of the Nursing Facility Task Force recommendations be pushed to the end of the agenda to allow the invited speakers to present first.

Vote 1 to approve the 1/24/2025 meeting minutes: Undersecretary Mahaniah requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Task Force's previous meeting on 1/24/2025. Representative Stanley introduced the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Pawelski and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

Task Force member, Ron Pawelski, provided a detailed presentation on the role of rest homes in Massachusetts and their vital function as cost-effective residential care facilities providing medical oversight, personal care, and housing for elderly and vulnerable populations, including those previously homeless. He highlighted the financial and regulatory challenges rest homes face, including outdated reimbursement models, lack of coordinated oversight, and the financial strain leading to closures, impacting thousands of residents. The presentation also outlines collaborative efforts with state agencies and healthcare organizations to improve placement processes and sustain rest home operations amidst growing demand. For additional details, refer to the MARCH presentation on the Task Force's [Meeting Materials webpage](#).

Undersecretary Mahaniah introduced Condase Weekes-Best, owner and operator of Wellspring Homecare, which operates two rest homes in Boston, Ann's Rest Home and Burgoyne's Rest Home. Ms. Weekes-Best provided an overview of her experience as an administrator of two small (11-13 bed) rest homes, emphasizing the importance of incremental funding to maintain staffing, facility upkeep, and regulatory compliance. She warned that loss of funding would lead to staff cuts, reduced quality of care, and potential non-compliance with healthcare standards, ultimately harming residents' well-being. For additional details, refer to Ms. Weekes-Best's presentation on the Task Force's [Meeting Materials webpage](#).

In response to members' questions, Mr. Pawelski clarified that for some facilities, the private-pay residents at rest homes serve to subsidize the costs of public-pay residents, although Tracey Cravedi emphasized that the amounts that are generated through private-pay residents are diminishing. Mr. Pawelski also noted that certain facilities have utilized their endowments to cover costs, such as capital improvements.

Task Force member, Pavel Terpelets, provided a summary of the recommendations from the Nursing Facility Task Force, which concluded its work in January 2020. He noted that while there was some discussion of rest homes, the Task Force focused almost exclusively on skilled nursing facilities. He detailed each of the Task Force's 19 "points of agreement," which were distilled into four "policy goals," each with their own policy proposals. In his presentation, Mr. Terpelets gave updates of which of the policy proposals had been enacted, explaining which proposals applied to nursing facilities and were not applicable to rest homes. For additional details, refer to Mr. Terpelets's presentation on the Task Force's [Meeting Materials webpage](#).

The full Nursing Facility Task Force report is available at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/nursing-facility-task-force-final-report/download>

In response to a member's question, Steve Davis from the DPH Division of Health Care Facility Licensure and Certification, noted that his team is currently drafting amendments to the licensure and suitability regulations for rest homes to incorporate what was included in the Long-Term Care bill. He explained that the amendments will strengthen the suitability requirements for both nursing facilities and rest homes.

In closing, Undersecretary Mahaniah reminded members that due to the February school break, the Task Force's next meeting would be held on Friday, 2/28.

Vote 2 to adjourn the meeting: Undersecretary Mahaniah requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Senator Jehlen introduced the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Carrington and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Meeting Materials

1. Draft 1/24/2025 meeting minutes
2. MARCH presentation
3. Condase Weekes-Best presentation
4. Nursing Facility Task Force recommendations