

## Rest Home Task Force

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

Date of meeting: Friday, January 10, 2025  
Start time: 10:30 am  
End time: 12:00 pm  
Location: Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Member Votes		Present	Vote I*
1	<b>Kiame Mahaniah</b> – Executive Office of Health and Human Services ( <i>chair</i> )	X	-
2	<b>Judy Bernice</b> – Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality, DPH	X	X
3	<b>Scune Carrington</b> – Private practitioner, BennuCare	X	X
4	<b>Kim Clougherty</b> – Department of Mental Health (DMH)	X	X
5	<b>Emily Cooper</b> – Executive Office of Aging & Independence (EOAI)	X	X
6	<b>Tracey Cravedi</b> – Hale House	X	X
7	<b>Moses Dixon</b> – Senior Connection	X	X
8	<b>Pamela Edwards</b> – Massachusetts Senior Action Council	X	X
9	<b>Patricia Jehlen</b> – Joint Committee on Elder Affairs	X	X
10	<b>Megan Nicholls</b> – Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)	X	X
11	<b>Patrick O’Connor</b> – Massachusetts Senate	X	-
12	<b>Ron Pawelski</b> – Massachusetts Association of Residential Care Homes (MARCH)	X	X
13	<b>Thomas Stanley</b> – Joint Committee on Elder Affairs	-	-
14	<b>Pavel Terpelets</b> – Office of Long-Term Services and Supports (OLTSS), MassHealth	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 explained that Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Secretary Walsh had appointed him to the Task Force as Chair. He informed members 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.

Gabriel Cohen, Program Manager with EOHHS, administered the oath of office to members.

Lauren Cleary, Associate General Counsel with EOHHS, provided an overview of the Open Meeting Law (OML) as it relates to the work of the Task Force. She emphasized the importance of transparency in how the Task Force conducts its work and explained the specific limitations related to members' communications (via email, text, and otherwise) outside of a formal meeting on matters which might pertain to the work of the Task Force.

David Giannotti, Public Education and Communications Division Chief within the State Ethics Commission, provided the Task Force with a brief overview of the State's conflict of interest and ethics regulations. He explained that members of the Task Force are considered "special state employees" and are required to complete conflict of interest trainings upon joining the Task Force. He detailed the various restrictions placed on members by the nature of their service on the Task Force and stressed that members should view the State Ethics Commission as a resource and not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns related to potential conflicts of interest and any required disclosures.

Undersecretary Mahaniah delivered remarks on the importance of the Task Force's work and the critical role that rest homes play in ensuring that older adults across the Commonwealth have access to housing and supportive services in environments which foster dignity and respect. After members introduced themselves, Undersecretary Mahaniah reviewed the Task Force's legislative charge, which includes evaluating the governance and regulatory structure of rest homes in the Commonwealth. He noted that the group was given until 4/1/2025 to submit its recommendations to the Legislature. For additional details, refer to the meeting presentation on the Task Force's [Meeting Materials webpage](#).

Undersecretary Mahaniah facilitated an open discussion of members' goals and expectations for the Task Force. In his remarks, Mr. Pawelski requested that he present to the Task Force at a future meeting, highlighted various topics he would like to cover, including the need for a regulatory revision; an independent analysis of rate adequacy; cost-reporting; restructuring the rate setting to improve quality-of-care and promote financial stability in the industry; the eligibility of rest homes to receive federal matching funds; and additional funding to support rest home capital improvement projects.

Judy Bernice and Kate Saunders from DPH's Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality provided a detailed overview of rest home licensing, reporting structures, and existing DPH data collected on DPH-licensed rest homes in the Commonwealth. For additional details, refer to the meeting presentation on the Task Force's [Meeting Materials webpage](#).

In response to members' questions, Ms. Saunders and Ms. Bernice explained that DPH likely does not have data on rest home closures from 1998 to the present, nor data readily available on private vs. public pay facilities that have closed. They also clarified that DPH does not collect clinical and demographic data on rest home residents, unlike skilled nursing facilities. Ms. Cooper clarified that MassHealth does collect demographic information on rest home residents, but only public-pay residents, giving only a partial picture of the industry.

At 11:50 am, Undersecretary Mahaniah left the meeting, assigning Mr. Cohen as his designee to facilitate the meeting.

Ms. Bernice clarified that while rest homes are required to provide a roster of residents as part of facilities' closure plans, these rosters would not include those residents who have already elected to move to another facility prior to the closure. She noted that because the plans include personally identifiable information that

is faxed to DPH, it is not regularly tracked. She also offered to share the regulations related to licensing applications, which while limited in scope, may be helpful for members to review.

In closing, Mr. Cohen highlighted the Task Force's Mass.gov webpage, where copies of the meeting materials will be posted for members of the public (<https://www.mass.gov/rest-home-task-force>). He noted that four additional Task Force meetings have been scheduled over the next three months, leading up to the 4/1/2025 deadline for submission of the Task Force's report and recommendations. He explained that for the group's next meeting on 1/24, he has invited MassHealth and DTA to present on the rate structures and payment mechanisms for rest homes.

**Vote 1 to adjourn the meeting:** Mr. Cohen requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Carrington introduced the motion, which was seconded by Dr. Dixon and approved by roll-call vote (see detailed record of votes above).

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

### **Meeting Materials**

1. Task Force meeting presentation
2. Open Meeting Law guide
3. State Ethics Commission handout