



Maryland Board of Public Works

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Meeting Date

OCTOBER 7, 2026

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS
80 Calvert Street
Annapolis MD 21401

Secretary

Item: 20

Michele Steward: Oppose

Dear Governor Moore, Comptroller Lierman, and Treasurer Davis:

I oppose MDH's request to use \$342,605.68 in General Funds to pay court-ordered sanctions to Anne Arundel County arising from seven criminal cases involving delayed admission for psychiatric treatment.

Please do not treat this as a routine payment request. MDH is asking taxpayers to cover the financial consequences of its failure to provide treatment within the time required by law. The Board should demand answers from the officials responsible.

Maryland law requires admission as soon as possible and no later than 10 business days after MDH receives the commitment order. These delays affect people found incompetent to stand trial and dangerous because of a mental disorder or intellectual disability. They need treatment, and paying sanctions does not get them that treatment.

The Daily Record reported on October 2 that an MDH spokesperson put accumulated sanctions at approximately \$4.7 million statewide. Please require MDH to confirm that figure and disclose how much has been paid, remains outstanding, is under appeal, and continues to accrue.

As the parent of an adult with developmental disabilities, I find this deeply troubling. Families are being told that Maryland must reduce spending on disability supports, while MDH is requesting General Funds to pay sanctions for failing to meet its obligations. That deserves a public explanation.

Before voting on this request, please ask:

- When did MDH leadership become aware of these delays, and what did it do?
- Why have those actions failed to bring admissions into compliance?
- How many people are currently waiting beyond the legal deadline, and how long have they waited?
- What barriers involve staffing, operational beds, discharge placements, or unavailable community supports?
- Which officials are responsible for correcting these failures, and what deadlines must they meet?
- What specific budget account will cover this payment, and will paying sanctions affect funding available for services?

I ask the Board to require a written corrective plan within 30 days, with funded actions, named responsible officials, and measurable deadlines. MDH should report publicly each month on admission delays, additional sanctions, and progress. If it misses a deadline, leadership should return to explain why and what will change.

This also raises a question for families relying on self-directed services: how does MDH verify that replacement providers can actually meet people's needs before proposing changes that require families to rely on them? A list of interested providers does not establish available staff or the ability to serve someone with complex disabilities. Please require evidence behind those capacity assurances.

My objection is to using public funds to absorb the consequences of repeated failures without meaningful accountability. MDH's court obligations remain, but the Board must also demand an explanation of how the department will stop these failures from continuing.

Please put those questions and MDH's answers on the public record. Maryland residents deserve to know what went wrong, who is responsible for fixing it, and when people will receive the treatment they are legally entitled to receive.

Respectfully,

Michele Steward

Anne Arundel County, Maryland