

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 788

(Senators Conway and Hollinger)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

Statewide Advisory Commission on Immunizations

This bill establishes a Statewide Advisory Commission on Immunizations composed of at least 13 members appointed by the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2002 and terminates May 31, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission must: (1) determine where community vaccine shortages exist and which vaccines are in short supply; (2) develop a recommendation for a plan to equitably distribute vaccines; and (3) study and make recommendations about other related issues. The commission also must report on its findings and recommendations by December 15 each year to the Governor, the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, and the Environmental Matters Committee.

A commission member may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) must staff the commission. The commission, along with the State Board of Education, must assist DHMH with adopting rules and regulations regarding the immunizations and blood tests for lead poisoning required of children entering schools.

Current Law: DHMH must consult with the State Board of Education and the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland on rules and regulations the department must adopt regarding the immunizations and blood tests for lead poisoning required for children entering schools.

Children enrolled in a public or private school must receive age-appropriate immunizations according to the schedule of immunizations recommended by the Subcommittee on Immunizations and Infectious Diseases of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland and the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene. Children must be immunized against a variety of diseases including diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps, and Hepatitis B. A parent or guardian must provide a physician's certificate of immunization so that the child may be admitted to school.

This does not apply to a student who presents a written statement from a licensed physician or a health officer indicating that immunization against any of these diseases is considered not in the best interest of the child's health. In addition, a parent or guardian who objects to immunizations upon the grounds of bona fide religious beliefs and practices is not required to present a physician's certificate of immunization so that the child may be admitted to school.

Background: Depending on age, each child may need 4 to 11 immunizations per year. DHMH estimates that approximately 80% of all children in the State are up-to-date on their recommended vaccinations.

DHMH has experienced delays in the production and distribution of childhood vaccines of between four to eight weeks from the time the vaccine is ordered to the time it is received.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1163 (Delegate Hubbard) – Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 6, 2002
mld/jr Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 27, 2002
Revised - Enrolled Bill - April 29, 2002

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