

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 883 (Delegates Rosenberg and Hubbard)
Health and Government Operations

Teen Pregnancy - Prevention - Grant and Aid Programs

This bill requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to award grants to establish or expand programs to prevent at-risk teenage girls from becoming pregnant.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2007.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DHMH general fund expenditures could increase beginning in FY 2008 to award grants perhaps significantly. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: Meaningful for any local government that may wish to expand or establish a teen pregnancy prevention program as a result of the bill.

Small Business Effect: Meaningful for any private group or organization that may wish to establish or expand a teen pregnancy prevention program as a result of the bill.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Any public or private group or organization establishing or expanding a program to prevent at-risk teenage girls from becoming pregnant may apply for a grant. A review panel established by the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene must set forth grant awarding criteria and recommend to the Secretary which applications should be approved for grants, which then must be awarded.

State funds may only be used to establish or expand teen pregnancy prevention programs. The State may recover disbursed funds, in addition to related recovery costs, if the recipient fails to use the funds for a teen pregnancy prevention program. The Secretary must adopt regulations to implement the bill.

Uncodified language requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to jointly conduct a study to determine the feasibility of expanding or replicating in Baltimore City and one other county in Maryland the teen pregnancy program operated by the Washington County Family Support Center and the Washington Public School System. By September 30, 2008, MSDE and DHR must jointly submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report regarding the results of this feasibility study. This provision terminates September 30, 2008.

Current Law: The Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene must publish a report of vital statistics at least once annually and print and distribute that report.

Background: The birth rate for Maryland adolescents ages 15 through 19 was 31.8 per 1,000 population in 2005 (the most recent year data is available), according to DHMH's Vital Statistics Administration. Over the previous five years, the birth rate for these adolescents has fallen. The birth rate for these adolescents was 41.2 per 1,000 population in 2001.

DHMH's Maryland Family Planning program provides reproductive health services, including teen pregnancy prevention services, at more than 80 clinics operated by local health departments and other public and private nonprofit agencies. The program serves approximately 78,000 women and men annually, of whom approximately 30% are younger than 20. The Governor's proposed fiscal 2008 budget includes \$12 million for the program (\$8.3 million general funds/\$3.7 million federal funds). This program includes the Healthy Teens and Young Adults program, which currently provides pregnancy prevention services to 7,000 high-risk young men and women in Baltimore City and Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties. The program's services include educational support, community awareness, clinical services, teen advisory groups, and parental involvement for male and female participants.

Another DHMH program focusing on teen pregnancy prevention is the Maryland Abstinence Education and Coordination Program (MAECP) that educates girls and boys between the ages of 9 and 19 about abstaining from sexual activity. The program helps implement abstinence education curricula and related programs. The Governor's proposed fiscal 2008 budget includes \$1.1 million for MAECP (\$578,000 general funds/\$557,000 federal funds). MAECP also partners with the University of Maryland, School

of Social Work to provide training, professional development, parent and community education, and youth-oriented conferences throughout the State.

The Washington County Family Support Center, in partnership with Washington County Public Schools, provides all pregnant students in the county the option of attending the center before and after the birth of their child and still graduate with their class. As a result, the center advises that students graduate on time, do not have additional children while they are in school, and go on to receive a higher education or additional skill training.

State Expenditures: DHMH general fund expenditures could increase beginning in fiscal 2008 to provide grants to establish or expand teenage pregnancy programs. The increase would depend on the number of public or private groups applying for grants, the level of funding requested, and the number of grants DHMH would award.

DHMH advises that a teen pregnancy prevention program that would include outreach services to encourage teenagers to access health clinics, reproductive health education, and assistance in making positive reproductive health decisions could cost as much as \$200 per teenager, based on the department's past experiences.

DHMH assumes it would award grants to provide pregnancy prevention services to an additional 5,000 adolescents at a cost of \$1 million annually beginning in fiscal 2008 (\$200 per teenager).

Legislative Services advises that the number of grant requests and the level of pregnancy prevention services public or private groups would seek to provide cannot be accurately predicted at this time. Annual grant amounts could be less than that estimated by DHMH and still reach a significant number of teenagers.

Existing MSDE and DHR staff could conduct the feasibility study to establish or replicate the teen pregnancy program operated by the Washington County Family Support Center and the Washington County Public School System.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Washington County, Department of Human Resources,
Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene,
Department of Legislative Services

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