

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 544

(Senator Kelley, *et al.*)

Finance

Health and Government Operations

**Joint Committee on Access to Mental Health Services - Establishment,
Membership, and Duties**

This bill establishes a Joint Committee on Access to Mental Health Services to monitor access to public mental health services for eligible individuals and medically necessary mental health services for individuals covered by private insurance. An annual report is due to the Governor and the General Assembly on the systemic barriers to accessing mental health services and recommendations to mitigate these barriers. The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) will provide staff.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Background: The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health identified six goals as the foundation for transforming mental health care in the United States: (1) Americans understand that mental health is essential to overall health; (2) mental health

care is consumer and family driven; (3) disparities in mental health services are eliminated; (4) early mental health screening, assessment, and referral to services are common practice; (5) excellent mental health care is delivered and research is accelerated; and (6) technology is used to access mental health care and information.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 796 (Delegates Hammen and Pendergrass) – Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): *Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America*, President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, July 2003; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2005
mam/jr Revised - Senate Third Reader - April 4, 2005

Analysis by: Lisa A. Daigle

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510