

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 282 (Senator Stone)
 Budget and Taxation

Income Tax - Credit for Long-Term Care Premium

This bill expands the existing Long-Term Care Insurance income tax credit by: (1) allowing the credit to be claimed for every year a policy is in force in the amount of \$500 in the first year the credit is claimed and \$150 thereafter; and (2) by allowing individuals who were covered by long-term care insurance at any time before July 1, 2000 to claim the credit.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2009 and applies to tax year 2009 and beyond.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund revenues decrease by \$18.2 million in FY 2010, which reflects the estimated number of taxpayers eligible for the expansion. Future year revenues reflect estimated number of policies in force. Expenditures are not affected.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
GF Revenue	(\$18.2)	(\$18.4)	(\$18.8)	(\$19.0)	(\$19.2)
Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$18.2)	(\$18.4)	(\$18.8)	(\$19.0)	(\$19.2)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 242 of 2000 allows taxpayers to claim a credit against the State income tax for no more than \$500 of the eligible premiums paid for long-term care insurance for coverage of the individual or the individual's spouse, parent, stepparent, child, or stepchild. The credit may not be claimed by more than one taxpayer with respect to the same insured individual and can only be claimed on behalf of a State resident. In addition, the credit may not be claimed with respect to an insured individual if: (1) the insured individual was covered by long-term care insurance at any time before July 1, 2000; or (2) the credit has been claimed by any taxpayer more than once for any individual's long-term care insurance policy. Any unused amount of the credit may not be carried forward to any other tax year.

Eligible long-term care premiums are as defined under Section 213 (d)(10) of the Internal Revenue Code. The maximum premium amounts under federal guidelines for tax year 2009 based on the age of the insured are: \$320 – age 40 or younger; \$600 – ages 41 to 50; \$1,190 – ages 51 to 60; \$3,180 – ages 61 to 70; and \$3,980 – ages 71 and over. These amounts are indexed according to the annual increase in the medical component of the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers.

Chapter 242 of 2000 also mandated that the Comptroller report annually beginning in 2005 the following information about the tax credit: (1) the number of individuals who have claimed the credit, the amount allowed as credits, and the additional number of individuals covered by long-term care insurance as a result of the credit; and (2) the savings under the State's Medical Assistance Program as a result of additional individuals being covered by long-term care insurance as a result of the credit.

Background: Long-term care typically provides for the medical, social, personal, and supportive services needed by people who have lost some capacity for self-care because of a chronic illness or condition. This includes services provided by nursing homes, hospices, and at-home care but does not include medical care for acute conditions. The population of long-term care recipients includes: the elderly; the functionally and developmentally disabled; and individuals suffering from mental disorders such as dementia and Alzheimer's.

Chapter 242 of 2000 established a one-time tax credit for the purchase of new long-term care policies in an attempt to promote purchases of new long-term care policies. The credit applies to tax years 2000 and beyond. The amount and number of returns that have claimed the credit as allowed by the Comptroller's Office are listed in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
Long-term Care Insurance Tax Credits

<u>Tax Year</u>	<u>Return</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Average Claim Per Credit</u>
2000	2,537	3,658	\$1,615,650	\$442
2001	5,185	7,032	3,044,110	433
2002	8,691	12,367	5,061,600	409
2003	12,756	18,964	8,436,160	445
2004	6,221	10,238	4,523,650	442
2005	8,470	11,751	5,250,320	447
2006	6,192	8,210	3,615,832	440
2007	6,089	7,778	3,349,434	431
Total	56,141	79,998	\$34,896,756	\$436

The amount reported above is less than the amount that has been reported in past annual reports issued by the Comptroller's Office due to improved data collection and analysis and taxpayers claiming the credit in error. Not included in the totals is approximately \$4.2 million in credits that the Comptroller's Office has determined have been claimed in error through tax year 2004, representing 8,400 credits and an 18.6% overclaim rate. In 2004, the Comptroller's Office determined that the credit had been claimed more than once for any given insured by many taxpayers. Procedures were put in place in 2005 to prevent that from occurring again, including an expansion of the data collected from these returns. In a handful of instances in 2005, credits were claimed in excess of \$500 or were claimed for an individual who was not the taxpayer's spouse, child, or parent. These returns were forwarded to the Comptroller's Compliance Division for appropriate action. According to the Comptroller's Office, these errors were virtually eliminated in tax year 2006 returns because they are now addressed before the return is fully processed.

Most of the credits have been claimed on behalf of individuals between 51 and 64 years old. Through tax year 2005, slightly less than one-quarter of the credits were claimed for an individual who is less than 50 years old (including 691 credits for insureds under 21 years old) and slightly less than one-fifth were claimed on behalf of insureds who were 65 years old and older. Approximately 1.5 credits were claimed per tax return at an average of \$436. Sixty-three percent of credits were claimed on behalf of the taxpayer, 35% on behalf of the taxpayer's spouse, and the remaining 2% on behalf of a taxpayer's parent or child. **Exhibit 2** lists the percentage of tax returns that claimed the credit by the amount of the taxpayer's Maryland Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI).

Exhibit 2
Tax Returns Claiming the Credit by MAGI
Tax Year 2000-2004

<u>MAGI</u>	<u>Percent of Total Returns</u>
Under \$30,000	4%
\$30,000-\$60,000	14%
\$60,000-\$100,000	27%
Over \$100,000	56%

In addition, Chapter 7 of 1998 created a tax credit equal to 5% of an employer's cost for providing long-term care insurance benefits to employees. The credit is capped at \$5,000 or \$100 per employee covered. This credit may be used by an employer against the public service company franchise tax, the financial institutions franchise tax, the insurance premium tax, or individual and corporate income taxes. If the tax credit exceeds the taxes due for any taxable year, the credit can be carried forward for up to five tax years. This tax credit applies to tax years 1999 and beyond.

The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 established favorable tax treatment for long-term care insurance similar to that granted to accident and health insurance premiums. Employee-paid premiums are treated as unreimbursed medical expenses that are potentially deductible from income along with other unreimbursed medical expenses. As such, if an individual itemizes deductions, the premiums are deductible to the extent that the individual's uncompensated medical expenses exceed 7.5% of the individual's adjusted gross income. This deduction is subject to an annual limitation based on the policyholder's age.

Employer-paid premiums are fully excludable from employee income. However, the benefits an employer provides under a long-term care insurance contract are not tax exempt to an employee if they are provided through a "cafeteria" plan. The State Employee Health Benefits Plan is an example of a "cafeteria" plan.

In addition, the federal Long-Term Care Security Act of 2000 offered the option of enrolling in long-term care insurance to most federal and U.S. postal service employees and retirees as well as active members of the uniformed services.

State Revenues: The bill expands the existing tax credit beginning in tax year 2009 by allowing individuals to claim the credit for every year the policy is in effect at a

maximum of \$500 in the first year and \$150 beginning in the second year and not just one time as provided under current law. In addition, the bill allows individuals who were covered by long-term care insurance at any time before July 1, 2000 to claim the credit. As a result, general fund revenues will decrease by an estimated \$18.2 million in fiscal 2010 based on the following facts and assumptions:

- In tax year 2000 to 2007, over 50,000 returns claimed the credit on a one-time basis and could claim an additional \$150 credit annually beginning in tax year 2009.
- An estimated 46,200 policies sold before July 1, 2000 will be in force and could be claim credits annually beginning in fiscal 2010.
- The average credit claimed per tax policy in 2000 to 2007 was \$436. Based on this average on current federal limitations on eligible premiums, it is assumed that the maximum additional credit of \$150 would be claimed every year that a policy is in force.
- The estimated number of policies in force each year is based on the renewal rates of long-term care insurance policies as reported by the Society of Actuaries and America's Health Insurance Plans.
- The amount of new policies claiming the credit in tax year remains relatively constant beginning in tax year 2009.

The bill provides substantial incentive for young individuals to buy long-term care insurance by providing a credit for a large portion of the premium. As a result, revenue losses could be higher than estimated.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1343 of 2008 was withdrawn. HB 1438 of 2008, HB 454 of 2007, HB 435 of 2007, HB 489 of 2006, and HB 134 of 2006 received a hearing from the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken. SB 429 of 2007 received an unfavorable report from the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. SB 138 of 2006, SB 716 of 2006, and SB 496 of 2005 received a hearing from the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): America's Health Insurance Plans, Comptroller's Office, Society of Actuaries, Department of Legislative Services

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