

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 293 (Delegate Costa)
Health and Government Operations

Physical Therapy Offices - Automated External Defibrillators - Training

This bill prohibits a person from practicing physical therapy in the State unless there is an automated external defibrillator (AED) in the treatment area of the office. The bill also requires a staff member who has received cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification (CPR) and AED training to be on-site when a patient is receiving physical therapy treatment. The bill does not apply to a licensee who works outside the licensee's office or at a hospital or related institution.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill does not affect governmental finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Meaningful for physical therapist offices, which will experience approximately a \$2,000 increase in expenditures to purchase an AED and train staff members in CPR certification and AED operation.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 167 of 1999, which created the Automated External Defibrillator Program, authorizes a facility to make AEDs available to victims of sudden cardiac arrest. The program is administered by the Emergency Medical Services Board, which certifies facilities to operate AEDs. A certificate is valid for three years and is not required for a health care facility, a licensed commercial ambulance service, or a jurisdictional emergency medical service. The board also sets fees for certificates and

other AED program services to approximate program costs. All fees collected are distributed to the Maryland Emergency Medical System Operations Fund (MEMSOF).

Background: The practice of physical therapy in Maryland is regulated by the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners. The board was created by the General Assembly in 1947 and is housed within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. From the outset, the purpose of the board has been to license and regulate members of the profession to ensure that the public receives safe and healthful physical therapy. Over the fiscal 2008-2009 biennial license renewal period, the board issued a total of 980 new physical therapist licenses and 402 new physical therapist assistant licenses, while renewing licenses for 3,758 physical therapists and 1,050 physical therapist assistants.

Most AEDs are about the size of a laptop computer. They analyze a cardiac arrest victim's cardiac rhythm, charge to an appropriate energy level, and deliver an electric charge, as directed by the operator, through adhesive pads placed on the victim's chest. The majority of AEDs cost between \$1,500 and \$2,000. The board advises that it is uncommon for physical therapists to have AEDs in their office unless they are practicing in a hospital setting.

The American Red Cross of Central Maryland offers on-site AED operation training. AED training may be scheduled with CPR training (5.5 hours) or with CPR and first aid training (7.5 hours). The AED course includes (1) interactive training on AED use; (2) interactive training and certification in adult CPR; (3) practice scenarios; (4) a skills card allowing employees to continue practicing after completing the course; and (5) first aid instruction if desired. AED training courses range from \$52 to \$58 per person.

The American Heart Association (AHA) strongly advises AED placement in all emergency medical services first-response vehicles and targeted public areas such as sports arenas, gated communities, office complexes, doctor's offices, and shopping malls. When an AED is placed in a business or facility, AHA recommends (1) that the persons that acquire the AED alert a local EMS office; (2) a licensed physician or medical authority provide medical oversight; and (3) the persons responsible for using the AED be properly trained.

It is not anticipated that physical therapists will require certification by the Emergency Medical Services Board under the bill, so MEMSOF revenues are not affected.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): American Heart Association, American Red Cross of Central Maryland, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

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