

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2013 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 898  
Finance

(Senator Klausmeier)

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**Task Force to Study the Process for Assisting Cancer Patients at Local  
Departments of Social Services**

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This bill establishes the Task Force to Study the Process for Assisting Cancer Patients at Local Departments of Social Services. The Governor must designate the chair of the task force, and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) must provide staff. By December 1, 2013, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2013, and terminates May 31, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The task force must study and make recommendations regarding the processes that local departments of social services use in providing assistance to individuals undergoing cancer treatment, including assistance in the form of food stamps, temporary cash assistance, energy assistance benefits, temporary disability assistance benefits, and medical assistance. The task force must also study and make recommendations regarding measures that local departments of social services can take to

better assist individuals undergoing cancer treatment. These measures include modifying the process for applying for assistance by (1) allowing telephone interviews of applicants; (2) streamlining the process for completing and submitting paperwork; (3) reducing wait times for applicants who apply for assistance in person; and (4) waiving for applicants undergoing cancer treatment any required drug tests.

A member of the task force may not receive compensation, but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

**Current Law/Background:** Local departments of social services, in cooperation with the central office of DHR, determine eligibility for and administer various benefit programs, including medical assistance, temporary cash assistance, and the food supplement program.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene maintains the Maryland Cancer Registry, a computer-based cancer incidence data system that tracks the number of individuals with cancer and helps communities to plan for cancer services. According to its 2012 report, cancer is the second leading cause of death in Maryland and in the nation. In 2009, over 26,000 individuals in the State were diagnosed with cancer, and more than 10,000 individuals died from the disease.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 1137 (Delegate Braveboy, *et al.*) - Appropriations.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 11, 2013  
ncs/lgc

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