

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

House Bill 661 (Delegates Myers and Krebs)  
 Health and Government Operations

Finance

**Health - Statistics and Records - Electronic Filing of Death Certificates**

This bill requires the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, on or before January 1, 2015, to (1) establish a process through which death certificates can be filed electronically and (2) educate physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners on the process.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2014.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$3,000 in FY 2015 to train physicians and other practitioners to use the electronic death certificate system. Existing budgeted federal funds are used to implement an electronic death registration system. Future years reflect ongoing maintenance costs. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	3,000	28,600	28,900	29,200	29,500
Net Effect	(\$3,000)	(\$28,600)	(\$28,900)	(\$29,200)	(\$29,500)

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

**Local Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect local government operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal.

## Analysis

**Current Law/Background:** The Secretary must establish appropriate methods and the necessary forms for accurate registration of vital records. There is no requirement for electronic recordkeeping. However, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DHMH) Vital Statistics Administration is already developing a system for electronic recordkeeping of standard death records. This system is scheduled to be ready for operation on January 1, 2015.

The current paper system requires input from different sources. Thus, a single piece of paper must be ferried between information providers. Death certificates must be filed within 72 hours. Nationwide, states are moving toward electronic vital records filing. Although individual states regulate death registration, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) provides recommendations and support, including funding, to states in an effort to streamline and standardize national recordkeeping. NCHS uses state records to produce national vital statistics through the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS).

**State Expenditures:** General fund expenditures increase by \$3,000 in fiscal 2015 to educate and train physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners to file death certificates electronically, as required by the bill. As DHMH has already received federal funding from NCHS to establish an electronic death certificate system (which the department advises should be completed by January 1, 2015), there is no further fiscal impact in fiscal 2015 to implement the electronic death registration system.

Out-year general fund expenditures include ongoing contractual maintenance costs for the electronic death certificate program as federal funding will not be available for this purpose. DHMH estimates these costs to be at least 15% of the original cost annually (plus inflation). The original system cost \$189,000. Thus, general fund expenditures increase by \$28,634 in fiscal 2016, escalating to \$29,501 in fiscal 2019.

Maryland does register and issue certificates for fetal deaths; however, the Vital Statistics Administration uses a paper system which is maintained and collected separately from death certificates. Thus, this analysis only relates to death certificates.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 17, 2014  
ncs/ljm Revised - House Third Reader - March 25, 2014

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