

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1509 (Delegate Hixson)
Rules and Executive Nominations

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Regional Institutes for Children and Adolescents - Report Before Closure

This bill requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to submit a report to the Governor and the Senate Finance, Senate Budget and Taxation, House Health and Government Operations, and House Appropriations committees justifying the closure of a Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA) before the RICA may be closed. The committees have 60 days to review and comment on the report. The report must include (1) the reasons for the closure; (2) the plan to serve the RICA's target population after the closure; (3) the budgetary savings anticipated from the closure compared to the costs to serve the RICA's target population in other settings; (4) the plan to assist State employees displaced by the closure in finding other employment; and (5) the plan for the RICA facility.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements can be handled with existing resources. DHMH advises that, before closing a facility, DHMH would have a justification and transition plan for the facility's patients and staff.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: There are two RICAs in the State: the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents – Baltimore and the John L. Gildner Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents – Rockville. DHMH’s Behavioral Health Administration oversees the facilities. State law requires that the facilities have comparable programs and facilities; however, facilities, programs, authorized positions, and State funding may not be reduced in order to attain comparability. Each facility also has a citizen advisory board, appointed by the Governor, which assesses and makes recommendations on the needs of individuals who have a mental disorder and the extent to which the facility meets these needs.

Both facilities serve children and adolescents with severe emotional disabilities and provide residential and day treatment. The Baltimore facility serves children and adolescents ages 12 to 18; the Rockville facility serves children and adolescents ages 10 to 18. In fiscal 2015, the average daily population for the 2 RICAs was 66 individuals.

Chapter 335 of 2008 (the fiscal 2009 Budget Bill) closed the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents – Southern Maryland (RICA-SM) due to the low number of individuals served at the facility and to eliminate the costs to maintain the facility. RICA-SM closed on June 30, 2008, with all residents transferred to alternative living facilities (such as other State facilities) according to their service needs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 586 (Senator King, *et al.*) - Finance.

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

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min/ljm

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