

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 975
Finance

(Senator Nathan-Pulliam)

Task Force to Study Drug Addiction as a Chronic Disease

This bill establishes the Task Force to Study Drug Addiction as a Chronic Disease. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must provide staff for the task force. Members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and specified committees of the General Assembly by April 1, 2020. **The bill takes effect October 1, 2018, and terminates September 30, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements can be handled with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must (1) make recommendations on whether the State should recognize drug addiction as a chronic disease and (2) study issues related to drug addiction, including:

- addiction to specified substances, such as opioids and cocaine;
- emergency room visits and deaths;
- economic and health care costs;
- effects on families;

- unemployment related to individuals with criminal records involving drug-related crimes;
- recidivism rates;
- physical and mental health issues;
- homelessness;
- deep-seated physiological problems;
- lack of health insurance coverage for treatment;
- exacerbation and remission status of similar chronic diseases, such as cancer and diabetes;
- ways to promote early detection of diseases related to addiction; and
- the number of failed treatment attempts.

Current Law/Background: MDH’s Behavioral Health Administration publishes several reports regarding behavioral health service utilization on its [website](#), including:

- *Average Length of Stay (Inpatient Care) Annual Reports:* Includes average length of stay, discharges, and percentage of 30-day readmissions.
- *Outcomes Measurement System (OMS):* Interactive data search tool with survey information regarding number of youth and adults receiving mental health and/or substance use treatment per calendar or fiscal year. Includes survey results regarding living situation, psychiatric symptoms, substance use, level of function, school status, and other demographic information.

According to OMS, in fiscal 2017, there were 30,748 intakes of adults (ages 18 to 64) for substance-related disorders.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

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mm/jc

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