

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 971 (Delegate Valentino-Smith)
Health and Government Operations

**Hospitals - Emergency Departments - Identification, Treatment, and Rescue of
Human Trafficking Victims**

This bill establishes that each hospital that provides emergency medical services must have a protocol to provide timely access to a sexual assault medical forensic examination by a forensic nurse examiner (FNE) or a physician to a victim of alleged human trafficking who arrives at the hospital for treatment. To the extent practicable, each hospital that provides emergency medical services must have a trained FNE on staff who is present at all times in the hospital’s emergency department to identify, treat, and rescue human trafficking victims who arrive at the emergency department for treatment.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: On or before July 1, 2014, each hospital that provides emergency medical services must have a protocol to provide timely access to a sexual assault medical forensic examination by an FNE or a physician to a victim of an alleged rape or sexual offense who arrives at the hospital for treatment.

Background: According to the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MHTTF), “human trafficking” means the illegal trading, either nationally or internationally, of human

beings for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor; a modern-day form of slavery. MHTTF further advises that Maryland's central location has facilitated its development as both a pass-through state and a destination for human traffickers. Traffickers utilize interstate highways to connect victims to major East Coast cities such as New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC.

The State Board of Nursing advises that, as of January 1, 2019, 140 FNEs are certified to examine adults, 2 are certified to examine pediatric patients, and 81 are certified to examine both adult and pediatric patients.

According to the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), to become an FNE for adults/adolescents, an individual must complete a 40-hour board-approved training, in addition to 40 hours of clinical rotation requirements. To become an FNE for pediatrics, further in-class training and clinical rotations are required. MCASA organizes and presents some of the trainings.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 605 (Senator Nathan-Pulliam) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault; Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force; Department of Legislative Services

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