

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 794

(Senators Lam and Gile)

Finance

Health

Health Insurance - Special Enrollment Period for Pregnancy - Coverage
Effective Date

This bill authorizes an individual who enrolls for coverage (or enrolls a dependent for coverage) during a special enrollment period (SEP) for pregnancy to choose when the coverage becomes effective. Coverage may become effective on either (1) the first day of the month the individual receives confirmation of pregnancy or (2) the first day of the month following the date of plan selection. If the individual fails to select the day on which coverage becomes effective, the carrier must select the day from these options. **The bill takes effect January 1, 2027, and applies to all health benefit plans issued, delivered, or renewed in the State on or after that date.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal increase in special fund revenues for the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) in FY 2027 from the \$125 rate and form filing fee; MIA's review of filings can likely be handled with existing resources. Any minimal operational impact on the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange can be handled with existing budgeted resources. No effect on the State Employee and Retiree Health and Welfare Benefits Program.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A small employer health benefit plan must provide an SEP for an eligible employee who becomes pregnant and an eligible employee's spouse or dependent who becomes pregnant, provided the spouse or dependent is otherwise eligible for coverage. A carrier participating in the Individual Exchange must provide an SEP for an individual who purchases coverage through the Individual Exchange if the individual or a dependent becomes pregnant. Other carriers must provide an SEP for an individual who purchases coverage outside the Individual Exchange if the individual or a dependent becomes pregnant.

Small employer and individual health benefit plans must provide an SEP during which an individual who becomes pregnant, as confirmed by a health care practitioner, may enroll in a health benefit plan. The SEP must be open for 90 days and begin on the date a health care practitioner confirms the pregnancy. Coverage must become effective on the first day of the month in which the individual receives confirmation of pregnancy.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Health Benefit Exchange; Maryland Insurance Administration; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 3, 2026
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