

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2024 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 820

(Senator McCray)(By Request - Baltimore City Administration)

Finance

**Hospitals - Care of Infants After Discharge**

This bill requires a hospital, prior to discharge of an infant, to provide oral and written instructions to an infant’s parent or legal guardian on the importance of and how to provide a “safe sleep environment.” Before discharging an infant, a hospital must (1) ask the parent or legal guardian to describe the environment in which the infant will be put to sleep at home and (2) obtain written verification from the parent or legal guardian that confirms they understand the instructions and information provided. The hospital must also provide a list of resources available in the county where the parent or legal guardian resides to obtain the items necessary to provide a safe sleep environment for the infant. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH), in consultation with local health officers, must maintain a list of resources available to parents and legal guardians to obtain the items necessary to provide a safe sleep environment for an infant.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** MDH general fund expenditures increase by \$31,200 in FY 2025 for part-time staff to maintain a list of safe sleep environment resources. Future years reflect annualization and elimination of one-time costs. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	31,200	32,600	34,100	35,600	37,100
Net Effect	(\$31,200)	(\$32,600)	(\$34,100)	(\$35,600)	(\$37,100)

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

**Local Effect:** The bill does not directly affect local governmental operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** “Safe sleep environment” means, as described in the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) policy statements, an environment that reduces the risk of all sleep-related infant deaths and in which a newborn (1) sleeps in a supine position; (2) sleeps on a firm, flat sleep surface; (3) sleeps in a bassinet, crib, or portable crib; (4) room shares without bed sharing; (5) avoids soft bedding; (6) avoids overheating; and (7) is not exposed to smoke.

Prior to discharge, a hospital must provide to an infant’s parent or legal guardian, oral and written (1) instructions on how to provide a safe sleep environment and (2) information about the important of ensuring that the infant has a safe sleep environment and the risks of an unsafe sleep environment, including suffocation and sudden infant death. The oral instructions may be supplemented by an instructional video. Each hospital must publish the information in a conspicuous manner of the hospital’s website.

**Current Law:** “Hospital” means an institution that (1) has a group of at least five physicians who are organized as medical staff for the institution; (2) maintains facilities to provide, under the supervision of medical staff, diagnostic and treatment services for two or more unrelated individuals; and (3) admits or retains the individuals for overnight care.

There is no requirement for safe sleep information to be provided to new parents or guardians by hospitals on discharge.

**State Expenditures:** General fund expenditures increase by \$31,215 in fiscal 2025, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2024 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one part-time (25%) health educator to consult with stakeholders and maintain a list of resources available in each applicable geographic area to provide a safe sleep environmental for an infant. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, and operating expenses.

Position	0.25
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$23,062
Operating Expenses	<u>8,153</u>
<b>Total FY 2025 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$31,215</b>

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

**Additional Comments:** According to the [AAP](#), approximately 3,000 infants die each year in the United States from sleep-related infant deaths, including sudden infant death

syndrome, and accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed. A safe sleep environment can significantly reduce the risk of all sleep-related infant deaths.

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### **Additional Information**

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

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Health; American Academy of Pediatrics; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 7, 2024  
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