

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

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

House Bill 1149 (The Speaker)(By Request - Office of the Attorney General)

Health and Government Operations

**Hospitals and Related Institutions - Outpatient Facility Fees**

This bill alters the definition of “hospital” to clarify which facilities that charge an outpatient facility fee must provide a patient with a written notice containing specified information. The required contents of the notice are also altered. The Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) must study and make recommendations regarding hospital outpatient facility fees and submit a preliminary report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee by December 1, 2024, and December 1, 2025, respectively.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** HSCRC special fund expenditures increase by \$75,000 in FY 2025 and 2026 only for contractual services to complete the required reports. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA), and the Health Education and Advocacy Unit (HEAU) within the Office of the Attorney General can provide input on the study with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	75,000	75,000	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$75,000)	(\$75,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** “Hospital” means an institution that (1) has a group of at least five physicians who are organized as a medical staff for the institution; (2) maintains facilities to provide, under the supervision of the medical staff, diagnostic and treatment services for two or more unrelated individuals; (3) admits or retains the individuals for overnight care; and (4) if located outside the State, provides outpatient services to patients in facilities located in State.

“Outpatient facility fee” is altered to mean a fee charged by a hospital for outpatient services provided in the State in compensation for the use of a hospital’s facility, clinic, supply, or equipment, including the service of a physician or nonphysician clinician. “Outpatient facility fee” does not include a fee charged separately by a physician or nonphysician clinician for professional services provided at the hospital.

Alternation of the definition of hospital requires a hospital located outside the state that provides outpatient services to patients located in Maryland that charges an outpatient facility fee to provide a patient with a specified written notice. As under current law, a hospital may not charge, bill, or attempt to collect an outpatient facility fee unless the patient was given specified notice.

### *Required Study and Reports*

Uncodified language requires HSCRC, in consultation with specified entities, to study and make recommendations, including legislative recommendations, regarding:

- the impact of hospital outpatient facility fees on the cost of health care services, access to care, health equity, and other topics as determined necessary by HSCRC, as specified;
- the impact of eliminating or reducing hospital outpatient facility fees on the cost of health care, access to care, health equity, and other topics as determined necessary by HSCRC, as specified;
- industry practices for seeking authority for an outpatient location to be approved as “at the hospital” and thereby subject to rate regulation;
- how hospitals use outpatient facility fees;
- how hospitals charge facility fees in addition to physician fees for professional services provided in hospital outpatient departments;
- the interaction of outpatient facility fees with Maryland’s Total Cost of Care (TCOC) model obligations to the federal government, as specified;
- efforts in other states, by federal Medicare and Medicaid regulatory agencies, and by national advocacy organizations related to the regulation or minimization of

facility fees, and the potential effects that similar efforts may have on health care costs in the State, including consumers' out-of-pocket costs;

- the licensing and regulation of fees charged by out-of-state hospital outpatient facilities located in the State; and
- the effectiveness of the notice of hospital outpatient facility fees that is currently provided to consumers, including any impact of the notice on the consumers' choice of location for health care services and any impact on utilization and access.

HSCRC must consult with MDH, MIA, HEAU, health care payers, consumer advocacy groups and representatives of (1) hospitals; (2) physician practices that provide services in hospital outpatient settings; and (3) employer groups.

**Current Law:** "Outpatient facility fee" means a hospital outpatient charge approved by HSCRC for an outpatient clinic service, supply, or equipment, including the service of a nonphysician clinician. "Outpatient facility fee" does not include a charge billed for services delivered in an emergency department or a physician fee billed for professional services provided at the hospital.

#### *Notice – Required Form, Timing, and Acknowledgement of Receipt*

Chapters 365 and 366 of 2020 require a hospital that charges an outpatient facility fee to provide a patient with a written notice containing specified information. A hospital may not charge, bill, or attempt to collect an outpatient facility fee unless the patient was given specified notice. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chapters 29 and 31 of 2021 delayed the implementation of these requirements until January 1, 2022.

The required written notice must include (1) relevant identifying information (for both the facility and patient); (2) the expected fee; (3) another location that does not charge a facility fee, if applicable; (4) insurance information regarding facility fees; (5) procedures for complaints; and (6) a section for the patient to acknowledge, by signature, receipt of the information on facility fees and related charges.

If a patient does not speak English or requires the notice to be in an alternative format, the hospital must provide the notice in a language or format that is understood by the patient to the extent practicable.

A hospital must determine the range of hospital outpatient facility fees and fee estimates to be provided in the required notice. The facility fees and fee estimates must be based on typical or average facility fees for the same or similar appointments, consistent with the hospital's most recent rate order as approved by HSCRC. Each hospital that charges an outpatient facility fee must use the range of hospital outpatient facility fees and fee estimates determined by the hospital.

When an appointment is made in person or by telephone, oral notice of information available in the form must be given at the time the appointment is made. When an appointment is made electronically or using a website, written notice must be provided at that time. Regardless of how the appointment is made, written notice also must be sent to the patient electronically at the time the appointment is made. However, if a patient refuses electronic communication, written notice must instead be sent to the patient by first-class mail.

Before professional medical services are provided on the date of the appointment, the patient must acknowledge in writing that the notice required under the bill was provided at the time the appointment was made.

When lack of notice is alleged in a consumer complaint, HSCRC must give consideration in its investigatory and audit procedures as to whether notice was not feasible due to circumstances beyond the hospital's control.

#### *Required Reporting*

Each year, each hospital must report to HSCRC a list of hospital-based, rate-regulated outpatient services provided by the hospital. HSCRC must post on its website and provide MIA and HEAU the list of hospital-based, rate-regulated outpatient services provided by each hospital.

#### *Health Services Cost Review Commission*

HSCRC is an independent commission within MDH charged with constraining hospital growth and establishing hospital rates to promote cost containment, access to care, equity, financial stability, and hospital accountability. HSCRC oversees acute and chronic care hospitals. HSCRC is responsible for implementing TCOC, the successor to the Maryland All-Payer Model Contract, under which it regulates hospital population-based revenues (commonly referred to as global budgets).

**State Expenditures:** Under the bill, HSCRC must study and make recommendations regarding hospital outpatient facility fees and submit a preliminary report by December 1, 2024, and a final report by December 1, 2025.

HSCRC advises that the study cannot be absorbed within existing resources and that contractual services are required to complete the study and submit the required reports. HSCRC estimates that the total cost for these contractual services is approximately \$150,000. Therefore, HSCRC special fund expenditures increase by \$75,000 in fiscal 2025, and \$75,000 in fiscal 2026 only.

## Additional Information

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

**Designated Cross File:** SB 1103 (The President)(By Request - Office of the Attorney General) - Finance.

**Information Source(s):** Office of the Attorney General; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Insurance Administration; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 4, 2024  
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