

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 978 (Delegate Morgan, et al.)
Commerce and Government Matters

Vehicle Laws - Motorcycle Helmets - Minors

This bill provides that motorcycle helmet laws apply only to minors. Current law requires everyone riding or operating a motorcycle to wear a helmet.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate increase in general fund expenditures as discussed below.

Local Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: General fund expenditures could increase for injured motorcyclists who are Medicaid recipients. The number of medical assistance recipients that would be injured cannot be reliably estimated. The following information is provided for informational purposes.

The average medical cost for medical assistance recipients treated for motorcycle related head injuries is \$27,700 per patient. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene advises that there were approximately 100 more motorcycle injury related hospitalizations per year prior to the enactment of the “all-rider” helmet laws. Under current law, 50% of any additional Medicaid expenditures are reimbursable by federal funds. However, Congress is considering legislation that may cap the amount of funds that states receive under Medicaid. As a result, it’s possible that any additional Medicaid expenditures will be funded entirely with general funds. It is not possible at this time to reliably estimate the magnitude of any increase in Medicaid program expenditures resulting from the bill’s requirements. State expenditures could also increase as a result of motorcyclists who sustain brain injuries and who become clients of the Developmental Disabilities Administration. Such

expenditures cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Transportation, Department of Fiscal Services

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