

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 760 (Senator Craig)
Economic and Environmental Affairs

**Long-Term Health Consequences of Nasal Radium Irradiation
Medical Procedures**

This bill establishes a nine-member task force to study the long-term health consequences of nasal radium irradiation medical procedures on recipients of those procedures. The task force is to determine the current health status of recipients who received nasal radium irradiation medical procedures from 1948 through 1960 and to determine how recipients should be notified of the risk of cancer and other diseases and administered appropriate medical care. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) will provide staff for the task force. The bill may not be construed to require the task force to notify by mail every surviving recipient of nasal radium irradiation treatment of the risk of cancer and other diseases. The task force must submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 1999. The task force terminates on January 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential significant general fund expenditure increase in FY 1999 and FY 2000. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene advises that fiscal 1999 general fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$1.1 million. This estimate reflects: (1) \$359,960 in printing and mailing costs to find Marylanders exposed to nasal radium irradiation; (2) \$750,000 in contractual services for a research institution to determine

the current state of health of individuals exposed to nasal radium irradiation; (3) \$21,410 for a contractual Epidemiologist to staff the task force and develop and monitor a Request for Proposal for a research institution; and (4) the bill's October 1, 1998 effective date. It includes one-time start-up costs and ongoing operating expenses. The information and assumptions used in calculating the estimate are stated below:

- a mailing to one million Maryland households to locate persons exposed to nasal radium irradiation @ 32 cents per mailing;
- an estimated 25,000 persons in Maryland might have been exposed to nasal radium irradiation;
- of the 25,000, an estimated 20,000 individuals could actually be located and require follow-up; and
- follow-up cost of \$75 per person.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises that fiscal 1999 expenditures could be lower for several reasons. There may be less expensive ways of identifying individuals who have been exposed to nasal radium irradiation medical procedures than mailing information to each individual household in Maryland, such as researching hospital and physician records, conducting a public media awareness campaign, doing public service announcements, or mailing notices in Marylanders' State income tax packages. Further, the bill doesn't necessarily require the task force to evaluate the impact of treatments on every Marylander exposed to nasal radium irradiation medical procedures; the task force could evaluate a sample of exposed citizens. Finally, DHMH could take advantage of bulk postal rates of 15 to 25 cents per piece, rather than 32 cents per piece.

On the other hand, fiscal 1999 expenditures could be lower or higher, depending on the exact number of individuals in Maryland exposed to nasal radium irradiation procedures. For example, the Radiation Experiment Assessment Project in Rhode Island estimates that 40,000 to 70,000 Marylanders may have been exposed. Therefore, it is not possible to reliably determine the bill's fiscal impact at this time, but it could potentially be significant.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Community and Public Health Administration), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 1998
Inc Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 31, 1998

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