

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

House Bill 287 (Delegate Morhaim. *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Health Care Workers' Safety Act - Bloodborne Pathogen Standard

This bill requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to study the exposure of health care workers to blood and other potentially-infectious materials by objects that penetrate the skin (e.g., needles), and report the study's findings to the General Assembly by January 1, 2000. Within 45 days after the study is submitted, the Secretary may initiate the process for publishing and issuing an appropriate proposed regulation based on the report.

The bill takes effect July 1, 1999 and sunsets on June 30, 2002.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal impact on general fund expenditures for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) in FY 2001. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: No effect.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal. As a result of any regulations that may be adopted, physicians' offices and clinics may incur additional medical supply costs to comply with new safety measures.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: DHMH can handle the research and reporting requirements of the bill with existing resources. Depending on the content of any regulations implemented as a result of this bill, DHMH expenditures potentially could increase by a minimal amount in fiscal 2001. Maryland Occupational Safety and Health has adopted the federal standard on bloodborne pathogens (29 CFR 1910.1030), which requires employers to use engineering and work practice controls to eliminate or minimize employee exposure. Engineering controls are defined as controls (e.g., sharps disposal containers, self-sheathing needles) that isolate or remove the bloodborne pathogen's hazard from the workplace. If regulations are adopted that are substantially different and require different supplies or practices, DHMH may incur additional costs to implement the regulations' requirements. The earliest that regulations may go into effect is April 1, 2000. It is more likely that regulations won't be effective until July 1, 2000. Consequently, there is no fiscal effect on DHMH in fiscal 2000 and a potential minimal increase in general fund expenditures in fiscal 2001 if DHMH has to comply with more expensive regulations.

Information Source(s): Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (Division of Labor and Industry); Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Community Public Health Administration, AIDS Administration); Department of Legislative Services

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