

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 591 (Delegate Goldwater. *et al.*)

Economic Matters

Health Insurance Carriers - Standing Referrals to Specialists

This bill expands the definition of “specialist” to include, in addition to a physician, any health care provider licensed under the Health Occupations Article who is certified or trained to practice in a specified field of health care. Accordingly, a health insurer, nonprofit health service plan, HMO, or dental plan organization (carrier) must provide for a standing referral, under certain circumstances, to any health care provider who is licensed under Maryland law and who is certified or trained to practice in a specified field of health care.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill’s requirements would not affect governmental finances or operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal. Health care providers that are not physicians may receive standing referrals for certain patients, which could result in increased provider income.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill requires a carrier to provide a member with a standing referral to any provider licensed under the Health Occupations Article, and not just to a physician who is certified or trained to practice in a specified field of medicine. This change requires a carrier to provide for a standing referral to health care providers such as audiologists, chiropractors, podiatrists, psychologists, or dentists.

Current Law: A carrier must provide a standing referral to a physician who is trained to practice in a specified field of medicine.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 502 (Senator Dorman, *et al.*) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Board of Physician Quality Assurance), Department of Legislative Services

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