

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 421 (Chairman, Environmental Matters Committee)
(Departmental – Health and Mental Hygiene)

Environmental Matters

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists - Disciplinary Actions

This departmental bill authorizes the Board of Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists (board) to require that a licensee submit to a physical or mental examination by a health care provider if the board has reason to believe the licensee may cause harm to his or her clients. The board is required to pay the cost of the examination. The bill also allows the board to take disciplinary action against a licensee or holder of a limited license who commits any act of unprofessional conduct in the practice of audiology, the provision of hearing aid services, or the practice of speech-language pathology. The requirement that an act of unprofessional conduct be defined in regulation is deleted.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: It is expected that the costs of any examinations ordered pursuant to the bill could be absorbed within the existing budgeted resources of the board.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: The board may take action against a licensee or holder of a limited license who commits any act of unprofessional conduct, as defined by the regulations of the board, or violates any code of ethics adopted by the board.

Background: The following health occupation boards have the authority to require a physical or mental exam: Board of Electrologists, Board of Examiners in Optometry, Board of Physician Quality Assurance, Board of Physical Therapy Examiners, and Board of Examiners of Psychologists.

The bill's changes would be of assistance to the board in prosecuting disciplinary cases.

State Expenditures: This bill requires the board to pay for the costs of any required medical examinations. DHMH estimates that the costs of any examinations required under this proposal would be, at most, \$500 annually.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Boards and Commissions), Office of Administrative Hearings, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – February 11, 2001
ef/cr

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