

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1134

(Delegates Finifter and Morhaim)

Environmental Matters

Health - Genetic Tests - Medical Laboratory Director

This bill requires a director of a medical lab that conducts genetic tests to be a physician or hold a doctoral degree from an accredited institution in a relevant chemical, physical, or biological science major; and be certified by the American Board of Medical Genetics or the American Board of Genetic Counseling.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal increase in expenditures to certify lab directors, if the State pays for employee certifications, and possibly to pay higher salaries to hire lab directors that meet the bill's educational requirements.

Local Effect: Potential minimal increase in expenditures to certify lab directors, if local governments pay for employee certifications, and possibly to pay higher salaries to hire lab directors that meet the bill's educational requirements.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal increase in expenditures if the labs pay for lab directors' certification and possibly to pay higher salaries to hire lab directors that meet the bill's educational requirements.

Analysis

Current Law: Genetic tests are defined as laboratory tests of human chromosomes, genes, or gene products that are used to identify the presence or absence of inherited or congenital alterations in genetic material that are associated with disease or illness. Gene products are the biochemical material, either RNA or protein, made by the gene.

Background: The registration deadline for taking the American Board of Medical Genetics and American Board of Genetic Counseling certification exams this year has passed. The exams are offered every three years. An individual seeking initial certification from the American Board of Medical Genetics must pay at least \$1,000 in application review and testing fees. An individual seeking initial certification from the American Board of Genetic Counseling must pay at least \$1,100 in application review and testing fees.

The director of the Laboratories Administration within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) meets the bill's first requirement. However, the director is not certified by either board specified in the bill.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures could increase depending on whether the lab directors in different State agencies have the qualifications required by the bill if the State pays for employee certifications. The State may have to replace the directors with an individual at a higher salary if they are not certified and are not doctors or do not have a doctoral degree in a relevant chemical, physical, or biological science major.

DHMH estimates that general fund expenditures would increase by \$117,208 in fiscal 2003 to hire a physician program manager to oversee genetic testing who would meet the bill's requirements. This person would not replace the current director. The Department of Legislative Services disagrees. The bill does not require the hiring of additional staff; only that existing staff meet its professional requirements.

Local Expenditures: Local government medical labs that conduct genetic tests could see a minimal increase in expenditures if they pay for the lab directors' certification. The labs also might have to replace their directors with individuals at a higher salary if they are not certified and are not doctors or do not have a doctoral degree in a relevant chemical, physical, or biological science major.

Small Business Effect: Medical labs that conduct genetic tests could see a minimal increase in expenditures if they pay for the lab directors' certification. The labs also might have to replace their directors with individuals at a higher salary if they are not certified and are not doctors or do not have a doctoral degree in a relevant chemical, physical, or biological science major.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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