

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2002 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**  
**Revised**

Senate Bill 46

(Senator Teitelbaum)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

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**Statewide Commission on the Crisis in Nursing - Study of the Use of Technology  
to Assist Nurses in Caring for Patients**

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This bill requires the Statewide Commission on the Crisis in Nursing to identify a technology-driven point-of-care application, in consultation with an individual with expertise in technology-driven point-of-care applications, to: (1) maximize nursing productivity and increase the quality of patient care; and (2) improve the work environment infrastructure in health care facilities.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2002.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for commission members and staffing costs for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Chapters 257 and 258 of 2000 created the Statewide Commission on the Crisis in Nursing. The commission is charged with: (1) developing recommendations on, and facilitating the implementation of, strategies to reverse the growing shortage of

qualified nursing personnel; and (2) advising public and private entities on how to facilitate implementation of the commission's recommendations.

**Background:** The United States is currently experiencing a nursing shortage that is projected to intensify as the nation's population ages and the need for health care grows. Compounding the problem of the increased need for nurses is the fact that the pipeline of new nurses is shrinking, with enrollments at nursing colleges and universities now in a six-year decline. According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the U.S. will experience a 20% shortage in the number of nurses needed in the U.S. health care system by the year 2020. This translates into a shortage of more than 400,000 registered nurses nationwide.

The Tri-Council, an alliance of four nursing organizations, has issued a policy statement on strategies to reverse the current nursing shortage. The Tri-Council recommends that policy makers focus on four main areas, including: (1) increased recruitment efforts in nursing schools; (2) workplace reforms; (3) legislation and regulation; and (4) technological advances to enhance the capacity of the reduced nursing workforce.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** *Journal of the American Medical Association* (June 14, 2000), American Association of Colleges of Nursing; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Board of Nursing, Maryland Health Care Commission, Health Services Cost Review Commission, Office of Health Care Quality); Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 23, 2002  
mld/jr Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 21, 2002  
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