

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2003 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 121 (Delegate Frush, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

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**Health - Hepatitis B Disease - Vaccination of First-Time Enrollees at Institutions of Higher Education**

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This bill requires a first-time enrollee in an institution of higher education to be vaccinated against the Hepatitis B virus. First-time enrollees must receive the first dose of a three-dose Hepatitis B vaccination before attending the institution of higher education and must have received the third dose within nine months of attendance. However, a student is exempt from the requirement if the student (or student's parent or guardian if the student is a minor) signs a waiver that states the student has received and reviewed information on the disease provided by the institution of higher education and has chosen not to vaccinate. Institutions are not required to provide or pay for the vaccinations.

The bill is effective July 1, 2004 and sunsets June 30, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill's requirements could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Chapter 580 of 2000 requires a student enrolled in an institution of higher education who lives in on-campus student housing to be vaccinated against meningococcal disease. A person is exempt from the vaccination requirement if the

student (or student's parent or guardian if the student is a minor) signs a waiver that states the student has received and reviewed the information on the disease provided by the institution of higher education and has chosen not to vaccinate. Institutions of higher education are not required to provide or pay for the vaccinations.

**Background:** Hepatitis B is a disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The hepatitis B virus can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis of the liver, liver cancer, and death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend a routine vaccination for people up to age 18 to prevent infection. The number of new Hepatitis B infections nationwide per year was approximately 78,000 in 2001. The highest rate of the disease occurs in individuals age 20 to 49.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore reports that it requires students enrolled in certain health care programs, such as dental and undergraduate nursing, to receive Hepatitis B vaccinations.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** A similar bill, HB 496, was introduced in the 2002 session and assigned to the House Environmental Matters Committee. It passed the House but received an unfavorable report in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; University of Maryland, Baltimore; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 31, 2003  
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