

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 9 (Senator Hafer)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health Occupations - Dentistry and Dental Hygiene - Examination

This bill prohibits the State Board of Dental Examiners from limiting the number of times applicants can take dentistry or dental hygiene general license exams. The bill repeals the requirement that dentistry or dental hygiene applicants who fail the general licensing exam twice must complete 40 hours of additional education at an accredited school of dentistry or an accredited dental hygiene program before taking the exam again. It also repeals the requirement that an applicant who fails an exam three times must retake and successfully complete the senior year of education at an accredited school of dentistry or an accredited dental hygiene program. Further, it repeals the requirement that an applicant who fails the exam four times may not be reexamined.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Any additional fee revenue for the clinical exams would go to the North East Regional Board of Dental Examiners, not the State Board of Dental Examiners. No effect on expenditures.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: To qualify for a general license to practice dentistry or dental hygiene, applicants must pass an exam. The State Board of Dental Examiners is required to give exams twice a year. Applicants must pay an exam fee either to the board or to an examining body designated by the board.

Background: There are 5,265 active licensed dentists and 2,589 active licensed dental hygienists in Maryland.

Before becoming licensed, dentists and dental hygienists must first pass clinical exams given by the North East Regional Board of Dental Examiners, Inc. Exams for dentists are written in four sections. Individuals taking the full exam or two or more sections pay \$1,050 and those taking an individual section pay \$650. Exams for dental hygienists are written in two sections. Individuals taking the full exam pay \$550 while an individual taking one section pays \$425. Both prospective dentists and dental hygienists must initially take the full exam and then retake any section of the exam they do not pass. Exam fee revenue is paid to the regional board, not the State Board of Dental Examiners.

The regional board reports that most people who take the dental and dental hygienist exams pass the entire exam within two or three attempts. The board offers the exams three times a year. A recent regional board review of test takers showed that of approximately 1,500 individuals who took the exams in a year, 58 had to take at least one section of the exam three or more times. The regional board requires that a test taker who fails at least one part of the exam three times must, on the fourth try, take the entire exam again.

State Fiscal Effect: The State Board of Dental Examiners reports that examination and remedial education are not functions of the board and do not contribute to the board's revenues or expenditures.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; North East Regional Board of Dental Examiners, Inc.; Department of Legislative Services

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