

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Revised

Senate Bill 519

(Senator Britt, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

Disease Prevention - Hepatitis C Advisory Council

This bill creates a 16-member State Advisory Council on Hepatitis C to review and recommend changes to the Maryland Hepatitis C Prevention and Control Plan and solicit funds or grants to implement the plan. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) must staff the advisory council. The advisory council must report to the Governor and the General Assembly by April 1, 2005 and annually thereafter.

The advisory council sunsets September 30, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for advisory council members and staffing costs for DHMH are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Background: Hepatitis C is an inflammation of the liver caused by a virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that there are an estimated 3.9 million people in the United States who are currently infected with the Hepatitis C virus. Of those, 2.7 million people are chronically infected. There were approximately 25,000 new Hepatitis C infections nationwide in 2001. Of the people infected with Hepatitis C, 80%

do not show signs or symptoms of the virus. Hepatitis C symptoms are jaundice, fatigue, dark urine, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, and nausea.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A bill that would have created a Hepatitis A, B, and C education and prevention program, HB 1035, was introduced in the 2002 session and received an unfavorable report by the Environmental Matters Committee. A bill similar to that one, HB 655, was introduced in the 2001 session and also received an unfavorable report in the Environmental Matters Committee.

Cross File: HB 386 (Delegate Nathan-Pulliam, *et al.*) – Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 19, 2003
mld/jr Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 25, 2003
Revised - Enrolled Bill - April 10, 2003

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