

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 852 (Howard County Delegation)
Health and Government Operations Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs

Howard County – Mental Health Advisory Board
Ho. Co. 18-04

This bill allows the Howard County governing body to designate a quasi-public authority (the Howard County Mental Health Authority) as the Mental Health Advisory Committee for the county.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Potential minimal expenditure reduction for Howard County because it would not be required to maintain two separate mental health advisory entities. The bill codifies existing practice in Howard County.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The governing body of each county must establish a mental health advisory committee to serve as an advocate for a comprehensive mental health system for persons of all ages. The governing bodies of two counties may establish an intercounty mental health advisory committee if the population of one of the counties is too small to warrant establishing a community mental health program for that county and the State Director of Mental Hygiene consents. The governing body of a county may establish a joint mental health and addictions advisory committee.

Each county advisory committee and intercounty advisory committee must have at least six meetings annually. Except in Montgomery County, staff services for each county advisory committee or intercounty advisory committee must be provided by the health officer for the appropriate county.

Each county advisory committee and intercounty advisory committee must: (1) monitor, review, and evaluate the allocation and adequacy of publicly-funded mental health services within the county; (2) determine the needs of the county mental health system; (3) participate in the development of the local mental health plan and local mental health budget; (4) prepare and disseminate an annual report; (5) review and comment on the core service agency or county health plan and preliminary budget, prior to submitting the budget to the State; and (6) review and comment on the annual fiscal report.

Background: The existing Howard County Mental Health Authority, a quasi-public authority that serves as the core service agency in the county, is responsible for planning, managing, and monitoring publicly-funded mental health services. The authority is overseen by a board of directors that took over all of the functions of the Howard County Mental Health Advisory Board, which is required under State statute. However, since statute still requires the existence of the advisory board, the county retained that board. As a result of having its functions transferred to the authority, the advisory board has not been able to attract or retain board members.

Local Expenditures: Howard County advises that expenditures potentially could decrease as a result of this bill because it would no longer have to maintain two separate mental health advisory entities.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 23, 2004
n/ljm

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