

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 427

(Delegate Hubbard, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and
Speech-Language Pathologists - Voting Powers

This bill limits the voting powers of the two physician members of the State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists. The physicians may not vote on proposals that expand or restrict the practice of audiology or speech pathology.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill would not substantively change State activities or operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The State Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, and Speech-Language Pathologists has 13 members: three licensed audiologists; three speech-language pathologists; three licensed hearing aid dispensers; two physicians who are licensed in the State and hold a qualification certificate from the American Board of Otolaryngology; and two consumer members, one of whom is hearing impaired. The Governor appoints the board members.

The board must meet at least once per year. Board members are compensated for each day on which the member is engaged in board duties and are reimbursed for travel expenses to attend meetings.

Background: The board generally holds 10 meetings annually. Last year, the physician board members attended eight of the 10 meetings.

The board was created in 1992 when the regulation of the three professions was consolidated under one board. Before they were combined, each of the boards had six members: three professionals; one otolaryngologist; one consumer; and one representative from another profession. Consequently, the speech-language pathology and hearing aid dealer boards both had an audiologist member, and the audiology board had a speech-language pathologist member. The membership of the combined board was set at 13, retaining three of each of the professionals regulated and reducing the total number of consumers and otolaryngologists to two each.

The allied-health committees within the Board of Physicians (the Physician Assistant Advisory Committee; the Respiratory Care Professional Standards Committee; and the Radiation Oncology/Therapy Technology, Medical Radiation Technology, and Nuclear Medicine Technology Advisory Committee) each have physician involvement.

However, there are not physician representatives on the other health occupations boards including: the State Board of Examiners in Optometry; the State Board of Dietetic Practice; the State Board of Pharmacy; and the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 205 of 2003, that would have eliminated the two physician members from the board, passed in the House but received an unfavorable report in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Its cross file, SB 588, passed in the House and Senate but was vetoed by the Governor.

Cross File: SB 281 (Senator Conway) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

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

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