

**Department of Legislative Services**

Maryland General Assembly

2005 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 800

(Senator Teitelbaum, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Child Health Advisory Council**

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This bill establishes an 11-member Child Health Advisory Council to study and make recommendations to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), and other State agencies on ways to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity. Council members are appointed to four-year terms, and the council must meet at least once per month. DHMH, MSDE, and the Department of Legislative Services must provide staff support and technical assistance for the advisory council.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Staff support for the Child Health Advisory Council could be provided with existing personnel and resources. Council members could be reimbursed for travel expenses from existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The Child Health Advisory Council would be a new State council.

Public elementary and secondary schools must offer physical education courses, and schools that receive funds from the school nutrition programs are prohibited from selling

foods of minimal nutritional value, as defined in federal guidelines, from 12:01 a.m. until the end of the last lunch period each day.

**Background:** Numerous sources state that the percentage of children who are overweight has nearly tripled over the last 20 years, a situation that has been linked to poor nutrition and a lack of physical activity. In a July 2004 presentation, the American Heart Association (AHA) reported that State legislatures have begun to address the increasing prevalence of child obesity. AHA claimed that 75 bills were filed in 32 states addressing the issue in 2004, an increase of more than 50% from 2003. The report also notes that successful legislation to date has generally begun with resolutions, recommendations, and studies and has emphasized collaboration between state and local education agencies.

Optional school nutrition standards recently approved by the State Board of Education limit the foods that can be sold in elementary and middle school cafeterias. The standards also strongly recommend that vending machines in schools be turned off until after the end of the regular school day.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 11, 2005  
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