

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1001 (Delegate Rudolph, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Emergency Medical Services Board - Commercial Air Ambulance Service

This bill requires the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Board to adopt regulations that provide for the reimbursement of a patient transport by a licensed commercial air ambulance service. A licensed commercial air ambulance service may collect, or a patient may submit a claim for, an amount less than or equal to the amount the individual's insurance carrier has agreed to reimburse for aeromedical transport when aeromedical transport is the indicated method of transporting an individual. A commercial air ambulance service may not discriminate against the individual based on insurance or reimbursement rate.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill would not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Commercial air ambulances are licensed and regulated by the EMS Board.

Background: Currently, private helicopters perform most inter-hospital air ambulance transports while the Maryland State Police helicopters (Medevac) perform almost all scene transports. Private helicopter services are supported through health insurance

reimbursements while State Police helicopter transports are supported by a surcharge on motor vehicle registrations. In fiscal 2003, commercial air services had about 2,900 inter-hospital transfers while the State Police had about 6,800 EMS flights in calendar 2002.

The average cost per flight for State Police Medevacs is about \$2,800. Two private companies that provide inter-hospital transfers are MedSTAR and STAT MedEvac. For the transfer services, MedSTAR reported a fiscal year average charge of \$4,200 and an average reimbursement of \$2,646. STAT MedEvac reported an average charge of \$8,000 for emergency medical services and an average reimbursement of \$4,000.

STAT MedEvac is a not-for-profit organization and transport patients regardless of their ability to pay. In fiscal 2002, they absorbed \$2.5 million in uncompensated care.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): *Annual Mandated Health Insurance Services Evaluation* (December 31, 2004), Maryland Health Care Commission; Department of State Police; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Maryland Health Care Commission); Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems; Department of Legislative Services

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mll/jr

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