

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

House Bill 236

(Delegate Nathan-Pulliam, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Health Occupations - Nurses - Dispensing Methadone

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This bill codifies the existing practice of registered nurse (RN) or a licensed practical nurse (LPN) working in a Department of Health and Mental Hygiene-licensed methadone clinic dispensing methadone according to regulations developed by the State Board of Nursing and the State Board of Pharmacy.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The bill would not directly affect governmental finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Statute allows an RN to perform specified acts that include the execution of a therapeutic regimen, such as the administration of medication and treatment. Statute also allows an LPN to administer treatment or medication only if the treatment or medication is prescribed by an individual who is authorized by law to prescribe such treatment or medication. State Board of Nursing regulations allow a certified nurse practitioner to prepare and dispense any drug that the nurse practitioner is authorized to prescribe in the course of treating a patient at specified locations, including a medical facility or clinic. A certified nurse practitioner must be licensed to practice registered nursing in the State and fulfill other board requirements.

**Background:** Methadone is a synthetic narcotic used to treat people addicted to heroin, morphine, and other opiates. Methadone, taken once daily, suppresses narcotic withdrawal. There are 42 methadone programs in Maryland: 22 privately funded and 20 publicly funded.

The State Board of Nursing advises that LPNs currently are used by methadone clinics to operate the clinic and dispense methadone to patients.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 5, 2007  
mam/ljm Revised - House Third Reader - March 26, 2007

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