

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 942

(Delegate Nathan-Pulliam)

Health and Government Operations

Finance

Health Disparities - Institutions of Higher Education - Report

This bill requires universities, colleges, and higher education programs of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and dentistry in the State to report to specified standing committees and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities by December 1, 2008 on specified courses that have been developed independently by the universities, colleges, and higher education programs in collaboration with the office, as required under law.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities is required to work collaboratively with universities and colleges of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and dentistry in the State and other health care professional training programs to develop courses with cultural competency, sensitivity, and health literacy, that are designed to address the problem of racial and ethnic disparities in health care access, utilization, treatment decisions, quality, and outcomes.

Chapter 443 of 2004 created the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to advocate for the improvement of minority health care and help the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene identify, coordinate, and establish priorities for programs, services, and resources that the State should provide for minority health and health disparities issues.

The office, among other duties, also must obtain funding and, contingent upon the funding, provide grants to community-based organizations and historically black colleges and universities to conduct special research, demonstration, and evaluation projects for targeted at-risk racial and ethnic minority populations and support ongoing community-based programs designed to reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities and develop the criteria for awarding the grants.

DHMH must submit an annual report on the office to the Governor and the General Assembly on the projects and services developed and funded by the office and the health care problems the grants are intended to ameliorate as well as any recommendations.

Background: The Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities advises that it is working actively with schools of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and dentistry in the State to develop and include courses and educational activities on cultural competency in their curricula.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Comptroller's Office, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, University System of Maryland, Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 6, 2008
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