

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 393 (Chairman, Health and Government Operations)
(By Request – Departmental – Health and Mental Hygiene)
Health and Government Operations Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Communicable Diseases or Conditions - Reporting

This departmental bill removes the specified list of 68 reportable diseases and conditions, along with the 48-hour time limit on reporting. Rather, the Secretary has to specify reportable diseases and conditions and timeframe requirements in State regulations. Finally, the bill authorizes the Secretary to require laboratories to submit clinical material when necessary, alters the format of disease reports made by laboratories, and makes various other technical changes relating to reporting requirements and dissemination of reported information.

Fiscal Summary

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment. (The attached assessment does not reflect amendments to the bill.)

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Clinical material” means • an organism isolated from a clinical specimen; • material derived or prepared from a clinical specimen in which evidence of a communicable disease has been identified or detected; or • if the organism or material is not available, material from an individual that has already been obtained by the

laboratory, in the following order of preference – first, a patient specimen; second, microbial genetic material; or third, other laboratory material.

The director of the State’s public health laboratory system is exempted from submitting a report to the health officer for the county where the laboratory is located after an examination shows evidence of any reportable infectious or contagious disease. Rather, these reports are transmitted directly to the Secretary.

Current Law: The director of a State laboratory has to submit a report to the health officer for the county where the laboratory is located within 48 hours after an examination shows evidence of a reportable disease or condition. Further, the director of an out-of-state laboratory who finds evidence of a reportable disease through examination must submit a report to the Secretary within 48 hours. There are 68 specific diseases and conditions defined as reportable.

Background: DHMH advises that it received 49,000 reportable disease case reports in 2007. According to DHMH, by removing the specific list of reportable diseases and conditions and 48-hour timeframe from statute, the bill would allow the Secretary to respond flexibly and timely to the changing types of communicable diseases. However, DHMH does not expect the list to change significantly.

DHMH advises that authorizing the Secretary to require the submission of clinical materials, such as a patient’s specimen, will allow for the validation or confirmation of laboratory results.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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