

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

House Bill 1176

(Delegate Pena-Melnyk, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Finance

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Public Health - Committee on Childhood Obesity

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This bill establishes a Committee on Childhood Obesity within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The committee is charged with studying childhood obesity and reporting on the following: • insurance reimbursements paid to health care providers to diagnose and treat childhood obesity; • a system for collecting, analyzing, and maintaining statewide data relating to childhood obesity; • best and promising practices to address childhood obesity, including community and school-based approaches; • methods to enhance public awareness of the chronic diseases related to childhood obesity, including the increased number of children developing diabetes; and • methods to increase the rate of obesity screenings for children. A report with findings and recommendations is due to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2009. Committee members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2008 and terminates June 30, 2010.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for committee members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable with existing resources. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene should be able to provide staffing with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** School breakfasts and lunches supported by State and federal funds must meet specific nutritional standards. A public school vending machine that sells foods of minimal nutritional value must use a timing device to automatically prohibit or allow access to the machine in accordance with nutritional policies established by the local board of education.

With the assistance of the local health department, each school system must provide adequate school health services, instruction in health education, and a healthful school environment. Additionally, each public school must have a program of physical education given in a planned and sequential manner.

**Background:** A National Center for Health Statistics 2003-2004 survey indicates that nationally, about 17% of children and adolescents 2 to 19 years of age were overweight. According to a report released by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in 2006, there is a lack of data on the weight of children in Maryland. However, 2002 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System data indicate that 14% of low-income children in federally funded maternal and child health programs aged 2 to 5 were overweight. This represents a significant increase from 8.2% in 1997.

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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 15, 2008  
mam/ljm Revised - House Third Reader - March 21, 2008  
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