

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 477 (Senator Madaleno)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**State Government - Dandy-Walker Syndrome and Hydrocephalus Awareness
Month**

This bill requires the Governor to proclaim the month of May as Dandy-Walker Syndrome and Hydrocephalus Awareness Month.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2008.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Recognizing Dandy-Walker Syndrome and Hydrocephalus Awareness Month would not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Four official commemorative days and two months are recognized in State law as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The Governor also must issue a proclamation each year encouraging citizens and other individuals to observe a moment of silence at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day to unite in remembrance and commemorate the heroic acts and efforts of Marylanders who have served and died in the U.S. armed forces.

Exhibit 1
Official Commemorative Days and Months in Maryland

Asian Lunar New Year Day ¹	January
Black History Month	February
Women's History Month	March
John Hanson's Birthday ²	April 13
Law Day	May 1
Poetry Day	October 15

¹Day designated as new year on the Asian lunar calendar.

²John Hanson served as the first president of the Continental Congress under the Articles of Confederation from 1781 to 1782.

Background: Dandy-Walker Syndrome is a congenital brain malformation involving the cerebellum and the fluid filled space around it. The syndrome can result in an increase in the size of the fluid spaces surrounding the brain. Symptoms often occur in infancy and include slow motor development and progressive enlargement of the skull. Symptoms such as irritability, vomiting, convulsions, unsteadiness, lack of muscle coordination, or jerky movements of the eyes can appear in older children. Dandy-Walker Syndrome is often associated with disorders of other areas of the central nervous system as well. Treatment generally consists of treating associated problems, and a tube can be placed in the skull for fluid drainage. Some children with Dandy-Walker Syndrome have normal cognition while others never achieve normal intellectual development even when treated early.

Hydrocephalus is also a condition characterized by fluid retention in the brain although it can be congenital or acquired. Congenital Hydrocephalus is present at birth and may be caused by environmental influences during fetal development or genetic predisposition. Acquired Hydrocephalus develops at birth or at some point afterward. This type can be caused by injury or disease and affect individuals of all ages. Further variations of Hydrocephalus are communicating or noncommunicating, and ex-vacuo or normal pressure Hydrocephalus.

The prevalence of Hydrocephalus is difficult to establish since there is no existing registry or database of those affected. However, estimates indicate that one in every 500 children is affected, with most diagnoses occurring prenatally, at the time of delivery, or in early childhood. Symptoms of the disease vary with age, disease progression, individual differences, and the type of Hydrocephalus. Often a child's head

circumference expands, and vomiting, sleepiness, irritability, downward deviation of the eyes, and seizures can occur. Older children and adults experience different symptoms because their skulls cannot expand to accommodate the buildup of fluid. Headache, vomiting, nausea, blurred vision, double vision, problems with balance, and poor coordination are just some of the symptoms that can result. Hydrocephalus is diagnosed through clinical neurological evaluation and various cranial imaging techniques. Treatment most often involves surgery.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 895 (Delegate Ross, *et al.*) – Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke,
Department of Legislative Services

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mll/hlb

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