

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 503 (Delegate Kipke, *et al.*)
 Health and Government Operations

Finance

Health - Maryland Commission on Autism

This bill establishes the Maryland Commission on Autism, staffed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), to make recommendations regarding services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders; develop a statewide plan for a system of training, treatment, and services for individuals with autism; evaluate ways to promote autism spectrum disorder awareness; and review the findings of any summit or conference convened by the State regarding autism spectrum disorders. Commission members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses. The commission must report its preliminary findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by June 1, 2011, and its final report by September 30, 2012.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2009, and terminates September 30, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$40,600 in FY 2010 for DHMH and MSDE each to hire one part-time contractual employee to staff the commission. Future year expenditures reflect annualization, inflation, and the termination of the contractual employees in FY 2013. No effect on revenues

(in dollars)	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	40,600	41,600	43,400	11,300	0
Net Effect	(\$40,600)	(\$41,600)	(\$43,400)	(\$11,300)	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission has to meet at least four times a year, including at least two times before June 1, 2010. In addition, the bill outlines specific tasks that must be executed by the commission when developing the statewide plan required under the bill.

Current Law: A number of programs, task forces, and councils address specific diseases and conditions. Some examples include the Asthma Control Program, the Osteoporosis Prevention and Education Task Force, the Kidney Disease Program, and the State Advisory Council on Hereditary and Congenital Disorders.

Background: Autism is the most common condition in a group of developmental disorders known as the autism spectrum disorders. Autistic children have trouble with social interaction as well as verbal and nonverbal communication, and they exhibit repetitive behaviors or narrow, obsessive interests. There is no known cure. Likewise, there is no known cause, but both genetics and environment likely play a role. Three to six children out of every 1,000 will have autism, and the condition is more likely to occur in males than females.

Chapter 340 of 2005 created a Pilot Program to Study and Improve Screening Practices for Autism Spectrum Disorders administered by MSDE. While the program terminated June 30, 2008, MSDE reported the following results from program activities:

- Pilot Program participants conducted 1,734 screenings of children for Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Pilot Program participants screened 3,922 children for developmental delay. Of that number, 1,059 children demonstrated at least one area of delay.
- Pediatricians involved in the project have access to a validated, structured follow-up interview for positive Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) screenings that has been shown to reduce false-positives and over-referral by 90%. The M-CHAT follow-up has been efficacious in reducing false-positive referrals in Maryland by over 90%, thus preventing the unnecessary expenditure of State resources. However, MSDE notes that the referrals made as a result of the M-CHAT follow-up have been appropriate and may not have been made otherwise.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$40,588 in fiscal 2010 for DHMH and MSDE each to hire a part-time contractual employee to staff the commission,

evaluate other state programs, and assist with the development of a statewide plan of services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. This estimate includes two part-time (30%) salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and operating expenses.

Contractual Positions	0.60
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$29,748
Operating Expenses	2,250
Start-up Costs	8,590
Total Fiscal 2010 Expenditures	\$40,588

Future years reflect two part-time contractual salaries with 4.4% annual increases and 6.8% employee turnover, 1% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses, and the termination of the contractual employees on September 30, 2012.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 963 (Senator Klausmeier, *et al.*) - Finance.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2009
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