

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1413

(Chair, Environmental Matters Committee)(By Request -
Departmental - Agriculture)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners - Veterinary Education -
Continuing Education Requirements**

This departmental bill authorizes the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (SBVME) to establish an annual continuing education requirement of at least 12 hours for veterinarians as a condition of license renewal. Under current law, SBVME is authorized to establish a 12-hour continuing education program.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal special fund expenditure increase in FY 2010 for notification requirements resulting from the bill. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland Department of Agriculture 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

Current Law: SBVME has the exclusive power to establish and alter the standards of preliminary and professional education and training requirements for applicants for a veterinary license. SBVME is authorized to establish an annual 12-hour continuing education requirement as a condition of license renewal.

Background: SBVME regulates just over 2,400 veterinarians, just over 500 veterinary hospitals, and approximately 315 registered veterinary technicians. Veterinarians and veterinary hospitals must be licensed by the board. Veterinarians must also register annually with the board. A person may register with the board as a veterinary technician.

To become licensed as a veterinarian in the State, an applicant has to submit a diploma or transcript from veterinary medical school, a recent North American Veterinary Licensing Examination score (within five years of taking the exam), an application fee, and a complete application. Foreign applicants who have graduated, or will graduate, from a school that is not approved or accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) also have to submit a certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates, which operates a program that assesses the educational readiness of graduates of nonaccredited schools. Applicants licensed in another state, or in a foreign jurisdiction, who graduated from an AVMA-accredited school, and whose licensing examination scores are more than five years old, may also qualify for licensure by meeting clinical experience requirements (in place of retaking the national licensing examination).

Upon becoming licensed, a veterinarian must also register annually with the board and pay the annual registration fee. A licensed veterinarian generally has to earn 12 credit hours of continuing professional education each year to renew the registration. However, by altering the 12-hour limit with this bill, SBVME is seeking to increase the required number of continuing education hours required of licensees to 18 hours, which the board reports is consistent with continuing education requirements of other boards across the country.

SBVME receives numerous requests for approval of continuing education from veterinarians and sponsors of workshops for veterinarians. These requests are for topics that are not clinical in nature but instead pertain to nonscientific subjects relating to the practice of veterinary medicine. SBVME is reluctant to disapprove these for credit; however, SBVME believes that veterinarians should participate in at least 12 hours of continuing education courses that have significant intellectual or practical content dealing with information on skills directly related to the practice of veterinary medicine.

SBVME reports that as a result of the bill, Maryland licensees would be permitted to submit a maximum of six hours of continuing education for approval that are directed toward nonscientific subjects related to the practice of veterinary medicine, such as practice management concepts and communication skills. Although such topics do not cover skills directly related to the practice of veterinary medicine, they are relevant to a veterinarian's success in working with clients and successfully operating a veterinary hospital.

State Fiscal Effect: SBVME indicates that it will notify all licensed veterinarians via first class mail of the new continuing education requirements. The cost of this mailing is estimated at \$2,000 in fiscal 2010 only. These costs can likely be absorbed within SBVME's existing special fund budget.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 16, 2009
mcp/ljm Revised - House Third Reader - March 30, 2009

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners – Veterinary Education –
Continuing Education Requirements

BILL NUMBER: HB 1413

PREPARED BY: Maryland Department of Agriculture

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND
SMALL BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND
SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

The proposed legislation will have no impact on small business in Maryland.