

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 759

(Senator Dyson)

Finance and Judicial Proceedings

Health and Government Operations

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Public Health - Certificates of Death - Nurse Practitioners

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This bill authorizes a nurse practitioner to sign and fill in information on a death certificate.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill does not affect governmental finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** In Maryland, nurse practitioners are registered nurses who are certified by the Board of Nursing as having completed an approved nurse practitioner program and passed an exam. The Board of Nursing, jointly with the Board of Physicians, sets forth regulations for nurse practitioners' scope of practice. A nurse practitioner can perform the following functions independently under a written agreement: comprehensive physical assessment of patients; establishing medical diagnosis for common short-term or chronic stable health problems; ordering, performing, and interpreting laboratory tests; prescribing drugs; performing therapeutic or corrective measures; referring patients to appropriate licensed physicians or other health care providers; and providing emergency care. A written agreement is developed between a licensed physician and nurse practitioner concerning the nurse practitioner's performance of the functions listed above. The Joint Committee on Nurse Practitioners, composed of an equal number of members

appointed by the two boards, develops the framework to be used in written agreements and makes recommendations regarding approval of agreements.

Chapter 233 of 2008 authorized a nurse practitioner to certify that a woman who is a minor and wishes to get married is pregnant or has given birth; provide the date of birth and medical information required on a birth certificate; witness a written or oral advance directive and document an oral one; give an oral “do not resuscitate order” for emergency medical services purposes if physically on the scene and in an outpatient setting; perform an initial consultant examination on an emergency evaluatee for purposes of reimbursement by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; conduct educational training programs required of applicants seeking certification by the Insect Sting Emergency Treatment Program; and certify an individual’s disability for the purpose of obtaining a special disability registration number and special disability registration vehicle plates. In addition, Chapter 233 authorized a nurse practitioner who has a collaborative agreement with a decedent’s attending physician to sign and fill in required information on a death certificate.

**Background:** A nurse practitioner is a nurse with a graduate degree in advanced practice nursing. Nurse practitioners provide a broad range of health care services in a variety of settings with or without physician supervision. Their scope of practice varies from state to state. For example, while they are not authorized to write prescriptions in some states, nurse practitioners in Maryland are authorized to do so.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 250 (Delegate Kullen, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 17, 2009  
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