

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 411

(Delegate Kach, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Statewide Advisory Commission on Immunizations - Membership, Duties, and
Sunset Repeal

This bill repeals the May 31, 2010 termination date for the Statewide Advisory Commission on Immunizations, and adds a consumer member and a pharmacist to the commission. Instead of the Med Chi physician on the commission acting as the chair, the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, in consultation with Med Chi, must appoint the chair of the commission. In addition, the term of a commission member is set at three years. The commission's charge is also adjusted to (1) require the commission to study and make recommendations about immunizations required of children entering schools at any time, not just in the times of vaccine shortages; (2) make recommendations regarding a public education campaign in the event of a public health emergency involving immunizations; (3) assess the availability and affordability of adolescent vaccines; and (4) review additional information regarding immunizations. In addition, the term of a commission member is set at three years.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2010.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal general fund expenditures for the commission are maintained beyond FY 2010. The additional study requirements and any expense reimbursements for the new committee members can be handled with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission has to review:

- potential provider reimbursement barriers to increasing immunizations;
- the relative effectiveness of outreach programs that educate the public about benefits of immunizations;
- potential cost-shifting of immunization expenses for privately insured patients who receive immunizations at local health departments; and
- potential administrative burdens associated with State purchasing of vaccines.

Based on this review, the commission must make recommendations on how to increase immunizations, including catch-up immunizations, among adults, adolescents, and children who are recommended to receive immunizations.

The commission may also recommend to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) that information on vaccine safety be communicated to health care providers.

Current Law: The Statewide Advisory Commission on Immunizations has to determine where community vaccine shortages exist, which vaccines are in short supply, and develop a recommendation for a plan for the equitable distribution of vaccines. In addition, the commission has to study and make recommendations about other related issues, including immunizations required of children entering schools in times of vaccine shortage; all available options for the purchasing of vaccines, including the development of a universal vaccine purchasing system or a similar program to increase access to necessary vaccines for the State; an update on the status of the use of thimerosal in vaccines including the availability and affordability of thimerosal-free vaccines, and any other issue related to the use of thimerosal in vaccines; elimination of any vaccine distribution disparities; a public education campaign in the event of a vaccine shortage; the availability and affordability of adult and childhood vaccines; and strategies to increase immunizations among those adults and children recommended to receive immunizations, including catch-up immunizations.

Annually, by December 15, the commission has to submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor and specified legislative committees. DHMH must staff the commission.

Background: The commission was established in 2002 and was originally set to terminate May 31, 2005, but the termination date has been extended two times since then. Additionally, in 2008, the commission was required to conduct a study on the current and anticipated future availability of single-dose influenza vaccines for use in the State. The

study also included the current and anticipated future cost differential between single-dose and multi-dose influenza vaccines.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: While not a cross file, HB 532 extends the termination date of the commission by three years to May 31, 2013.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2010
mpc/mwc Revised - House Third Reader - March 29, 2010

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