

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 693 (Delegate Hubbard, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Finance

Health and Human Services Referral Board - 2-1-1 Maryland - Modifications

This bill replaces four self-funded pilot programs used to administer the Health and Human Services Referral System with “2-1-1 Maryland” – a State information network which may approve up to five nonprofit call centers to provide 2-1-1 services in the State. In addition, the bill changes the membership and term limits of the Health and Human Services Referral Board that oversees the system, reduces its membership from 17 to 13, requires board members to reflect the race and gender of the State population, and entitles members to travel expense reimbursement. The bill also alters the board’s purpose to reflect the system over which it has oversight.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill’s requirements do not affect governmental finances since the bill essentially codifies an existing program. Board member travel expenses can be absorbed within each respective agency budget.

Local Effect: None. If Montgomery County seeks approval to provide 2-1-1 services, it can likely align its program with 2-1-1 using existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “2-1-1” means the abbreviated dialing code assigned by the Federal Communications Commission for consumer access to community information and referral services.

The bill specifies factors that 2-1-1 Maryland must consider when approving a 2-1-1 service provider. In addition, any State unit that provides health and human services and establishes a public information telephone line or hotline must consult with 2-1-1 Maryland about using the 2-1-1 system to provide public access to information.

The bill requires any call center in Montgomery County approved by 2-1-1 Maryland to align with 2-1-1 Maryland by July 1, 2011.

Current Law: Chapter 390 of 2004 established the Health and Human Services Referral Board within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) staffed by the Maryland State Association of United Ways. The board oversees four self-funded pilot programs to provide a single-source information and referral phone number (2-1-1) for health and human services statewide. The pilot programs include Community Crisis Services, Inc.; United Way of Central Maryland – First Call for Help; Mental Health Association of Frederick County; and Life Crisis Center, Inc. The board also determines how to implement the “health and human services referral system” (2-1-1 telephone service) statewide; how to integrate emergency and nonemergency numbers; and funding options for the referral system. Funding for the board is subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The board must annually report to the Governor and the General Assembly on its activities.

Background: Maryland’s four self-funded 2-1-1 pilot programs were launched in 2006, joining 43 other states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico that already have 2-1-1 systems in place. Seventy-five percent of the U.S. population has access to 2-1-1. The 2-1-1 service provides information and helps identify current and emerging needs or gaps in services.

The board submitted its last report in 2007 recommending that 2-1-1 be fully funded in fiscal 2009. While 2-1-1 received a grant through the Department of Human Resources in fiscal 2009, it has not received any State funding since. The board has not met since submitting its 2007 report.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 527 (Senator Frosh, *et al.*) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Department of Budget and Management, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of State Police, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 19, 2010
ncs/mwc Revised - House Third Reader - April 1, 2010

Analysis by: Sarah K. Volker

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510