

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 753
Finance

(Senator Benson)

Home Health Care Services - Documents Requiring Signature

This bill requires that, if an agency requires an individual receiving home health care services to sign a paper or electronic document, the document (1) may not be altered after the individual has signed the document; and (2) must include the statement: “This signature is for verification of visit only.” “Agency” refers to a home health agency, a home-based hospice care program, a residential service agency, a nursing referral service agency, or any other entity that provides home health care services.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill’s requirements do not affect governmental finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Home health agencies provide home health care services such as skilled nursing and physical therapy, as well as equipment and supplies. Home health agencies are licensed annually by the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ). According to OHCQ, home health agencies are also strongly regulated by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which pay the agencies for services provided to Medicare beneficiaries. Home health agencies are surveyed at least every three years. Currently, there are 58 licensed home health agencies in Maryland.

Hospice programs provide a coordinated, interdisciplinary program of hospice care services for meeting the special physical, psychological, and social needs of dying individuals and their families. Specifically, hospice programs provide palliative and supportive medical, nursing, and other health services through home or inpatient care during both illness and bereavement. According to OHCQ, hospice programs are surveyed every six and a half years. There are currently 32 licensed hospice programs in the State.

Nursing referral service agencies screen and refer home health providers at client request. These agencies are licensed every three years by OHCQ, but they are not surveyed routinely. Currently, there are 89 nursing referral service agencies in Maryland.

Residential service agencies include any agency that employs or contracts with individuals directly for hire as home health care providers. These agencies are licensed annually by OHCQ, but they are not surveyed routinely. There are currently 788 residential service agencies in the State.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 264 (Delegate B. Robinson, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

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

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