

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
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FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 76

(Senator Montgomery)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners - Volunteer Podiatrist License

This bill establishes a volunteer podiatrist license issued by the State Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners. An applicant for a volunteer podiatrist license must certify that he or she will not accept payment or reimbursement of any kind for services rendered.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues for the board increase by an estimated \$5,000 in FY 2012 from new licensure fees. Future year estimates reflect one additional licensee per year. Special fund expenditures for the board also increase beginning in FY 2012.

(in dollars)	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
SF Revenue	\$5,000	\$5,200	\$5,400	\$5,600	\$5,800
SF Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	\$5,000	\$5,200	\$5,400	\$5,600	\$5,800

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: An individual who holds an active, inactive, or expired license from the board or an active license issued in another state may obtain a volunteer podiatrist license if he or she submits an application and license fee. An individual with an inactive license must also submit any information or documentation that is required to be submitted for reinstatement by a licensee who is on inactive status. An individual who holds an active

license in another state or held a license issued by the board that has expired must also meet initial licensure requirements in Maryland.

A volunteer podiatrist license must be clearly designated as such. The board may revoke the license of a volunteer podiatrist license who accepts payment or reimbursement of any kind for services rendered. The fee for a volunteer podiatrist license must be lower than the fees charged for a license to practice podiatry.

Current Law: An individual is required to have a license from the board to practice podiatric medicine in the State. To be granted a license, the individual must:

- be of good moral character;
- be at least 18 years old;
- be a graduate of a school or college of podiatry that is accredited by the Council on Education of the American Podiatric Medical Association and approved by the board;
- pass the National Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners examination and an examination given by the board;
- complete a postgraduate podiatric residency program or have practiced podiatry for at least five years immediately prior to applying for a Maryland license; and
- demonstrate oral competency in the English language.

The board requires each full license applicant to pass Parts I, II, and III of the national board examination with a passing score as set by the national board. The applicant is also required to take a jurisprudence and ethics exam, which is prepared and administered by the board. Full licenses are renewed every two years. Half of the renewal fee, however, is charged to the licensee over a two-year period, with half payable the year prior to expiration of the license and the remainder due at the time the podiatrist applies for license renewal. The board does not currently issue a volunteer license.

The State Board of Dental Examiners issues four volunteer licenses: a retired volunteer dentist license, a retired volunteer dental hygienist license, a volunteer dentist license, and a volunteer dental hygienist license. A retired volunteer licensee may only provide dental or dental hygiene services in a dental office, clinic, ambulatory care facility, or hospital for a charitable or public entity providing medical care to the poor, elderly, or

disabled. The applicant must agree to donate at least 100 hours of dental services or dental hygiene services without compensation, provide proof of malpractice insurance, and not practice dentistry or dental hygiene for profit. A volunteer license may only be used for volunteer services and not for compensation and must be covered by malpractice insurance. There is no fee for volunteer licenses or retired volunteer licenses. According to the State Board of Dental Examiners, there are currently 10 volunteer dentists in Maryland, but no retired volunteer licenses have been issued.

Background: Doctors of podiatric medicine, commonly known as podiatrists, are licensed to treat the human foot or ankle. Podiatrists treat a variety of ailments, ranging from bunions to tendon strains. Podiatrists also perform surgery, fit corrective devices, prescribe drugs, and administer physical therapy.

The 2009 preliminary sunset evaluation of the board conducted by the Department of Legislative Services found that the number of licensed podiatrists in Maryland has declined in recent years in large part because of a growing number of retirements. In fiscal 2011, there are approximately 450 licensed podiatrists in Maryland.

The biennial licensure fees for a podiatric license are \$1,050 – the highest of any health occupations board in Maryland and significantly higher than those charged in neighboring states. Through a board survey, many retiring podiatrists expressed interest in a volunteer license, which would allow them to continue to practice under limited circumstances while paying lower fees to the board. According to the board, a volunteer license is intended to increase access to care by encouraging pro-bono work.

State Revenues: Special fund revenues for the board increase by \$5,000 beginning in fiscal 2012 from licensure fees for the volunteer podiatrist license. This figure assumes:

- approximately 25 podiatrists will seek a volunteer podiatrist license; and
- as advised by the board, the license fee will be \$400 per biennial renewal cycle, payable as an annual \$200 fee.

Future years assume one additional new licensee per year.

State Expenditures: Special fund expenditures for the board increase by a minimal amount in fiscal 2012 and out-years due to increased postage and telephone expenses associated with issuing and renewing volunteer podiatrist licenses. These costs are anticipated to be covered by fee revenues. Any additional requirements on board staff can be handled with existing resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 190 (Delegate Hubbard, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

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

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