

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 314
Finance

(Senator Pugh, *et al.*)

Appropriations

State Personnel - Traumatic Events - Mental Health Support Services

This bill requires Executive Branch agencies to obtain mental health support services for any employee affected by a traumatic event that occurs in a State facility that is owned, leased, or operated for the purpose of providing health, juvenile, or correctional services to clients or inmates, and that results in the death of an individual. The mental health services must be provided within 48 hours of the traumatic event.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The services required by the bill are available to Executive Branch employees through existing personnel or contracts.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: State personnel law does not address the provision of mental health services to State employees who experience a traumatic event at their place of work. However, the Employee Assistance Program is a confidential service offered to help State employees who face personal matters that adversely affect job performance. The program is managed through the Department of Budget and Management's Office of Personnel Services and Benefits. Following a free initial assessment, an employee may be referred for treatment that may occur during work hours.

Additional mental health services are available at no additional cost from mental health professionals employed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Department of Juvenile Services or through local County Crisis Response Teams.

Background: Between September 2010 and October 2011, three patients at Clifton T. Perkins Hospital, the State's maximum-security mental hospital, were killed in three separate incidents, including two within one week of each other. They are believed to be the first murders in the hospital's 50-year history. In at least one of the three murders, the body of the victim was found by staff making routine checks.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1193 (Delegate Nathan-Pulliam, *et al.*) - Appropriations.

Information Source(s): Department of Budget and Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Juvenile Services, *Washington Post*, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2012
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