

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 776

(Senator Young)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

Polysomnographic Technologists - Education and Examination Requirements

This bill authorizes an applicant for a polysomnographic technologist license to meet educational requirements by an alternative means. Specifically, an applicant may have graduated from a sleep technologist educational program that is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and completed a clinical component of an educational program as established by the Polysomnography Professional Standards Committee and approved by the State Board of Physicians. The bill also requires the board to waive the educational requirement for licensure as a polysomnographic technologist if, by September 30, 2013, an individual has passed an examination approved by the board.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill does not materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The practice of polysomnography means monitoring and recording physiologic data during sleep, including sleep-related respiratory disturbances under the supervision of a licensed physician, or using these data for the purposes of assisting a licensed physician in the diagnosis and treatment of sleep and wake disorders. It also includes diagnosing and treating individuals who suffer from sleep disorders under certain circumstances.

Chapter 595 of 2006 requires the State Board of Physicians to license and regulate the practice of polysomnography and established the board's Polysomnography Professional Standards Committee. Under Chapter 595, polysomnographic technologists initially had to be licensed by October 1, 2009. However, Chapters 261 and 262 of 2009 delayed the licensing requirement to October 1, 2011. Chapters 267 and 268 of 2011 further delayed the licensing requirement until October 1, 2013.

To qualify for licensure as a polysomnographic technologist, applicants must have passed a national certifying examination, submit proof of certification as a Registered Polysomnographic Technologist™ or other national certification approved by the board, and meet certain educational requirements. Specifically, an applicant must have either (1) graduated from a polysomnographic educational program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP); (2) graduated from an accredited respiratory care educational program and completed the Committee on Accreditation of Respiratory Care's curriculum for a polysomnography certificate; or (3) graduated from an accredited electroneuro-diagnostic educational program and completed additional instruction focused on polysomnographic technology.

Background: Sleep technologists are licensed or otherwise regulated in California, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Two community colleges in Maryland currently offer polysomnographic technologist programs accredited by CAAHEP. One of the two community colleges, Community College of Baltimore County, utilizes an online/distance learning format.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has developed the Accredited Sleep Technologist Education Program (A-STEP) to promote the standardization of sleep technologist education and training. Completion of A-STEP is a two-step process: an 80-hour introductory course that concludes with a three-hour online exam; and 23 A-STEP Self-Study modules that include a 30-minute online video presentation followed by a set of 10 review questions. Students are encouraged to complete the modules while they receive 18 months of supervised, on-the-job training from a sleep disorders center. Anecdotal evidence suggests that A-STEP is the most common way in which individual sleep technologists receive their education.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 641/HB 560 of 2011, as introduced, contained similar provisions but did not include those provisions when enacted as Chapters 267 and 268.

Cross File: HB 827 (Delegate Hubbard) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): American Academy of Sleep Medicine, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 20, 2012
ncs/ljm Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 29, 2012

Analysis by: Jennifer B. Chasse

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