

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

Senate Bill 1097

(Senator Hershey)

Finance

Rules and Executive Nominations

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**Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Workgroup to Evaluate Mental  
Health Care Delivery on the Eastern Shore**

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This bill requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to convene a workgroup to evaluate and make findings and recommendations regarding the state of mental health care delivery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The workgroup must report its findings and recommendations by December 31, 2014, to specified committees of the General Assembly.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** DHMH can convene and staff the workgroup with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The 20-member workgroup must evaluate the state of mental health care and delivery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland including:

- whether and to what extent individuals with mental illness are being referred to out-of-state mental health facilities;
- the adequacy of the mental health care workforce;

- the impact that closure of the Upper Shore Community Mental Health Center has had on communities in the former service area of the center and the feasibility and cost of reopening the center;
- the barriers to accessibility of mental health services on the Eastern Shore; and
- the volume of admissions and mix of forensic and nonforensic patients in State-run psychiatric facilities and whether there is sufficient capacity for nonforensic patients in these facilities.

**Background:** On November 18, 2009, the Board of Public Works approved processing of the budget amendment approving the closure of the Upper Shore Community Mental Health Center. At the time it closed, the center had a bed capacity of 40. Two other facilities formerly operated under the direction of the Mental Hygiene Administration (Walter P. Carter Community Mental Health Center and Crownsville Hospital Center) have also closed in recent years.

Chapter 395 of 2011 (the fiscal 2012 budget bill) included language restricting a total of \$200,000 in the budgets of the State-run psychiatric hospitals for the purpose of conducting an independent analysis of population and placement trends at those hospitals. The report was due to the General Assembly by December 1, 2011. After requesting and being granted an extension, DHMH submitted the report in September 2012.

The report was intended to be a starting point in the assembling of data necessary to properly plan future capacity at the State-run psychiatric hospitals. Legislative interest in this issue stemmed from the knowledge that the physical plant of the current facilities systemwide is inadequate as well as the potential reuse of current State-run psychiatric facility sites. Of the five facilities, the Eastern Shore Hospital Center (built within the past 15 years) is the newest facility. The facility plant at Thomas B. Finan Hospital Center and Clifton T. Perkins Hospital Center, while older, is generally considered adequate; Perkins, in particular, has seen considerable capital improvements in recent years and is scheduled for more in the *Capital Improvement Program*. Springfield Hospital Center and Spring Grove Hospital Center are both facilities set on sprawling campuses that were designed to hold thousands of patients and are now serving just over 600 combined.

In the past several years, operating capacity at, and admissions to, the facilities has fallen significantly. Types of admissions have also changed significantly. For example, nonforensic admissions now form less than 19% of total State-run psychiatric facility admissions. However, the average length of stay at the facilities has increased.

## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** SB 972 of 2013, as amended in the Senate, was similar to this bill; it was referred to the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee where no further action was taken.

**Cross File:** HB 1144 (Delegate Jacobs, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 11, 2014  
mc/ljm Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 31, 2014

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