

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 74  
Finance

(Senator Feldman, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

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Task Force to Study Maternal Mental Health

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This bill establishes the Task Force to Study Maternal Mental Health to explore and make recommendations regarding maternal mental health disorders that occur during pregnancy and the first postpartum year. By December 15, 2016, the task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. The Mental Health Association of Maryland must provide staff for the task force.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2015, and terminates December 31, 2016.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursement for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources. Participating in the task force by State entities requires resources to be redirected from other activities. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The 25-member task force includes 1 member of the Senate and 1 member of the House of Delegates. The Governor must designate the chair of the task force. A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for standard travel expenses.

The task force must (1) identify vulnerable populations and risk factors in the State for maternal mental health disorders; (2) identify and recommend prevention, identification,

and treatment strategies; (3) identify successful postpartum mental health initiatives in other states and recommend programs, tools, strategies, and funding sources needed to implement similar initiatives in Maryland; (4) identify and recommend evidence-based practices for health care providers and public health systems; (5) identify and recommend private and public funding models; and (6) make recommendations on legislation, policy initiatives, funding requirements, and budgetary priorities to address maternal mental health needs in Maryland, as well as any other relevant issues identified by the task force.

**Background:** Maternal mental health disorders, including depression and anxiety, are illnesses caused by changes in biology, psychology, environment, and hormones. Maternal anxiety and depression are the most common complications of childbirth. Up to 20% of women experience clinical depression associated with pregnancy or childbirth. It is estimated that as many as 80% of mothers with depression are not receiving treatment.

**Additional Comments:** The Mental Health Association of Maryland has agreed to provide staff for the task force and coordinate meetings, take notes and minutes, and compile the final report. However, the Department of Legislative Services notes that it is unclear how task force members who are not affiliated with State agencies would be reimbursed for allowable expenses.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 739 (Delegate Kelly, et al.) – Health and Government Operations.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 2, 2015  
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