

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader

Senate Bill 600

(Senator Reilly)

Finance

Health and Government Operations

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Freestanding Birthing Centers - Use of Ultrasound Imaging

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This bill requires the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, after consulting with specified entities, to establish by regulation standards to ensure quality of care and patient safety for the use of ultrasound imaging in a freestanding birthing center.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) can adopt the required regulations within existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal. Any impact on small business freestanding birthing centers depends on the scope of the regulations adopted.

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Analysis

**Current Law/Background:** After consulting with representatives of payers, health care practitioners, and ambulatory care facilities, the Secretary must establish, by regulation, certain standards to ensure quality of care and patient safety in freestanding ambulatory care facilities. These standards must include procedures for credentialing and practitioner performance evaluation, qualifications of health care practitioners and support personnel, emergency procedures, procedures for quality control of biomedical equipment, and procedures for postoperative recovery and discharge.

A freestanding birthing center is a facility that provides nurse midwife services. A freestanding birthing center is only authorized to provide “normal maternity” care, which

is defined in regulations as a low-risk, uncomplicated prenatal course as determined by adequate prenatal care and prospects for a normal, uncomplicated birth as defined by reasonable and generally accepted criteria of maternal and fetal health. “Normal maternity” does not include the use of drugs for induction or augmentation of labor, general and regional anesthesia, vacuum extractors, forceps, recorded electronic fetal monitors, ultrasound imaging, cesarean section, or surgical procedures other than episiotomy or perineal repair. Despite this exclusion, OHCQ advises that a freestanding birthing center has never been cited for the use of ultrasound imaging.

As of November 2015, there were two licensed freestanding birthing centers in Maryland, both located in Anne Arundel County.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 1303 (Delegate Angel) - Health and Government Operations.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 22, 2016  
min/ljm

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