

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1184 (Delegate Angel, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Workgroup to Study the Effect of Poverty on the Behavioral Health of Children

This bill requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and other parties deemed appropriate by the departments to establish a workgroup to study the effects of poverty on the behavioral health of children. By December 31, 2016, the workgroup must submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and specified committees of the General Assembly.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. DHMH, MSDE, and DHR can carry out the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The workgroup must:

- review studies on the link between poverty and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other behavioral health issues in children;
- review studies on the effect of PTSD on children living in poverty and on school performance; and

- review methods to identify and meet the needs of students living in poverty who are at risk for PTSD and other behavioral health issues.

Current Law: There is no relevant current law on this topic.

Background: In January 2016, the Department of Legislative Services published a comprehensive report on poverty, [History, Public Policy, and the Geography of Poverty: Understanding Challenges Facing Baltimore City and Maryland](#). The report cites a study conducted by The Johns Hopkins University (Latimore, *et al.*, 2014) discussing the effects of an initiative that provided mental health services to youth participants in a Baltimore job-training program. According to the report, 51% of participants had either clinically relevant depression, anxiety, or PTSD symptomology, yet only 20% of those individuals had received prior mental health services. The study provided mental health services to a select group of program participants and compared their outcomes to a control group that did not receive services. Young males in the intervention group were two to four times more likely to be employed after six months than similar males in the control group. There was also a 34% reduction in incarceration rates among males age 18 and older in the intervention group compared with the comparison group.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

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md/ljm

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