

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 1424 (Delegate Angel, *et al.*)
 Ways and Means

Regulation of Youth Sports - Ice Hockey Clubs - Noncontact League

This bill requires a “youth ice hockey league” (a group that organizes ice hockey games, leagues, or tournaments for individuals younger than age 18) to offer at least one noncontact ice hockey league at each age group or skill level for each full-contact league the club offers. A youth ice hockey league must advertise a noncontact ice hockey league in the same manner as a full-contact league. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) must require the suspension of all ice hockey games, leagues, or tournaments of a youth ice hockey club that is not in compliance with these requirements. DHMH must adopt regulations to implement the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DHMH general fund expenditures increase by *at least* \$64,600 in FY 2017 for additional personnel to implement the bill’s requirements. Revenues are not affected. Future years reflect annualization and inflation.

| (in dollars) | FY 2017 | FY 2018 | FY 2019 | FY 2020 | FY 2021 |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Revenues | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| GF Expenditure | 64,600 | 80,800 | 83,900 | 87,000 | 90,400 |
| Net Effect | (\$64,600) | (\$80,800) | (\$83,900) | (\$87,000) | (\$90,400) |

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: Although local finances are not materially affected, the bill may have an operational impact on local departments of parks and recreation to the extent they oversee youth ice hockey leagues.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: State law does not regulate youth sports, with limited exceptions. Under § 14-501 of the Health-General Article, youth sports programs must make available information on concussions, head injuries, and sudden cardiac arrest developed by the Maryland State Department of Education to coaches, youth athletes, and the parents or guardians of youth athletes. A coach of a youth sports program must review the information. A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury in a practice or game must be removed from play at that time and may not return to play until the youth athlete has obtained written clearance from a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions. Before a youth sports program may use a facility owned or operated by a local government, the local government must provide notice to the youth sports program of these requirements.

A youth sports program that uses a public school facility must provide annually to the county board or the board's agent a statement of intent to comply – for all of its athletic activities – with the requirements (1) for the management of a concussion or other head injury of a participant and (2) to provide participants and parents and guardians with information on sudden cardiac arrest and notice that acknowledgement of the receipt of the information is required.

Background: Youth hockey is governed by the National Federation of State High School Associations and USA Hockey. USA Hockey moved the age of legal body checking (contact between opposing players) for boys' hockey from the PeeWee level (age 12 and younger) to the Bantam level (age 14 and younger) beginning with the 2011-2012 season. Girls' and women's hockey is played without checking. According to USA Hockey, during the 2014-2015 season, 5,661 youth younger than age 19 were registered to play in Maryland.

In 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics made the following recommendations regarding youth hockey: (1) expand nonchecking programs for boys age 15 and older; (2) restrict body checking in boys' ice hockey games to the highest competition levels and allow skills to be taught in practices beginning at age 13; (3) reinforce rules to prevent body contact from behind, into, and near boards; (4) educate players on preventing contact from behind; and (5) continue to study the effects of and injury from legal body checking.

Some noncontact hockey leagues were formed in Canada to provide competitive youth hockey without body checking. Hockey Canada increased the age for legal body checking to the Bantam level (age 14 and younger) for the 2013-2014 season.

State Expenditures: The bill requires DHMH to adopt regulations and require the suspension of all games, leagues, or tournaments of a noncompliant league. As there is

currently no regulation of youth ice hockey leagues, personnel is needed to implement the bill. DHMH advises that three full-time equivalent positions are required: two full-time program administrators, one part-time (50%) contractual health policy analyst to establish regulations, and one part-time (50%) data entry operator to develop and manage a registry of youth ice hockey leagues. This estimate assumes monitoring, inspection, and regulation of only five youth ice hockey leagues statewide. DHMH advises additional personnel are required to monitor compliance for every five additional leagues.

The Department of Legislative Services concurs that *a minimum* of one additional position is required to implement the bill's requirements. Thus, DHMH general fund expenditures increase by *at least* \$64,552 in fiscal 2017, which reflects the bill's October 1, 2016 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one grade 17 program administrator to identify youth hockey leagues, establish regulations, monitor leagues for compliance, and coordinate the suspension of any noncompliant leagues. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. This estimate does not include travel expenditures or any costs associated with inspections to ensure compliance.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Position | 1 |
| Salary and Fringe Benefits | \$56,437 |
| One-time Start-up Expenses | 4,363 |
| Ongoing Operating Expenses | <u>3,752</u> |
| Total FY 2017 State Expenditures | \$64,552 |

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): American Academy of Pediatrics, USA Hockey, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

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