

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 216

(Senator Kelley, *et al.*)

Finance

Health and Government Operations

Maryland Caregivers Support Coordinating Council - Renaming and Altering
Membership and Duties

This bill renames the Maryland Caregivers Support Coordinating Council (MCSCC) to be the Maryland Commission on Caregiving and adds one member of the Senate and one member of the House of Delegates to the commission. The Governor, to the extent possible in making appointments to the commission, must consider groups representing individuals (1) with disabilities, disorders, or conditions affecting the entire lifespan and (2) who reflect the diversity of the State. The bill expands the duties of the commission to include (1) providing ongoing analysis of best practices in family caregiver support programs in this and other states and (2) monitoring the implementation of its recommendations. The commission must also include in its annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly recommendations regarding family caregiver support services.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially impact State finances or operations, including those of the Department of Human Resources (DHR) which provides staff support to MCSCC. Any expense reimbursements for the additional members can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: MCSCC is located within DHR. Its purpose is to coordinate statewide planning, development, and implementation of family caregiver support services. Members, including representatives from DHR, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Department of Aging, are appointed by the Governor and serve three-year terms. DHR provides staff for MCSCC. Members of MCSCC may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses.

MCSCC must:

- solicit and gather concerns of caregivers, as specified;
- develop and distribute to interested parties a handbook of current respite care and other family caregiver services available in the State;
- review successful respite care programs in other states;
- develop a model family caregiver support program that incorporates best practices from existing programs in this and other states;
- coordinate activities of existing and proposed family caregiver support services among State and local units;
- research available funding sources and explore possibilities for additional funds; and
- identify unmet needs and priorities for additional funds.

MCSCC is required to report annually on its activities to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Background: According to the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, approximately 90% of long-term care services received in the United States are provided by informal, unpaid caregivers such as family members, friends, and neighbors. By 2030, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the percentage of people age 65 or older in the State will double; as this population increases in size, the need for caregivers increases as well.

The bill reflects some of the recommendations of the Task Force on Family Caregiving and Long-Term Support, created by Chapter 155 of 2015, which issued its required report to the Governor and the General Assembly in September 2016. The report noted that caregivers often operate with inadequate support systems and lack information and skills, and that strategies are needed to alleviate what is known as “caregiver stress syndrome.” According to a 2015 survey administered by MCSCC, 60% of family caregivers in the State were employed either full-time or part-time, and 40% expressed considerable stress and worry about making a mistake when performing necessary caretaking tasks.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 769 (Delegate West, *et al.*) – Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources; National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys; Department of Legislative Services

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