

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1531 (Delegate S. Howard, *et al.*)  
Health and Government Operations

---

Task Force on the Premature Discharge of Patients With Substance Use  
Disorders

---

This bill establishes a Task Force on the Premature Discharge of Patients with Substance Use Disorders. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must provide staff for the task force. A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by January 1, 2019. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2018, and terminates June 30, 2019.**

---

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill's requirements can be handled with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** Local health departments can participate with existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The task force must collect information on:

- the treatment practices for patients who are admitted to facilities designed to treat substance use disorders;

- the procedures at facilities designed to treat substance use disorders for the discharge of patients;
- the reasons patients assessed as needing inpatient treatment for the treatment of substance use disorders are discharged from treatment facilities; and
- patient abandonment practices at facilities designed to treat substance use disorders.

The task force must make recommendations regarding changes to improve staff training, patient treatment, and discharge practices at substance use treatment facilities, as well as whether such facilities should be required to report on the frequency of early patient discharge.

**Current Law/Background:** MDH’s Behavioral Health Administration publishes several reports regarding behavioral health service utilization on its [website](#), including:

- *Average Length of Stay (Inpatient Care) Annual Reports:* Includes average length of stay, discharges, and percentage of 30-day readmissions.
- *Outcomes Measurement System (OMS):* Interactive data search tool with survey information regarding number of youth and adults receiving mental health and/or substance use treatment per calendar or fiscal year. Includes survey results regarding living situation, psychiatric symptoms, substance use, level of function, school status, and other demographic information.

According to OMS, in fiscal 2017, there were 30,748 intakes of adults (ages 18 to 64) for substance-related disorders.

---

### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 921 (Senator Hershey) - Finance.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 27, 2018  
md/jc

---

Analysis by: Sasika Subramaniam

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510