

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 394 (Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
Committee)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners - Sunset Extension and Program  
Evaluation**

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This bill extends the termination date for the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (SBVME) by 10 years to July 1, 2031. The bill also requires SBVME to report to the Governor and General Assembly, by December 31 each year, on the board's disciplinary activities for the previous fiscal year.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Board special fund revenues and expenditures are maintained beyond FY 2021. The Governor's proposed FY 2021 budget includes \$818,794 for board operations. The bill's reporting requirement can be handled with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** SBVME regulates more than 3,000 veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians, 600 veterinary hospitals, and 30 animal control facilities. Veterinarians licensed to practice in Maryland and veterinary hospitals licensed to operate in the State must also register annually with the board. A person may register with the board as a veterinary technician; although such registration is optional, it does confer certain scope of practice benefits to veterinary technicians. Accordingly, the board is responsible for licensing and registering veterinarians, licensing and inspecting veterinary

hospitals, registering veterinary technicians, and licensing animal control facilities to administer drugs needed to sedate and/or euthanize animals.

The board is 1 of approximately 70 regulatory entities and activities subject to evaluation under the Maryland Program Evaluation Act (MPEA), which establishes a process better known as “sunset review” because most of the agencies subject to review are also subject to termination, including the board, which is scheduled to terminate July 1, 2021.

As part of the sunset review process, SBVME underwent a preliminary evaluation in 2018. At the end of that evaluation, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) concluded that there were unresolved questions about whether the board was fully achieving its purposes of protecting the public and animal health and welfare and recommended that further evaluation of the board be undertaken.

Pursuant to changes under Chapters 510 and 511 of 2019, entities subject to MPEA may be evaluated by DLS only as directed by specified entities or by legislation. However, Chapters 510 and 511 established, in uncodified language, the intent of the General Assembly that DLS conduct an evaluation of SBVME by December 1, 2019, and make recommendations by January 1, 2020, to the committees of jurisdiction on a new termination date for SBVME.

The [2019 full evaluation](#) of SBVME by DLS focused on issues identified in the 2018 preliminary evaluation, including issues regarding the board’s administrative workload, complaint handling process, finances, performance measures, and online services and database systems. DLS found that the board is carrying out its mission with the resources available to it and that there is no doubt that the board should continue to exist, recommending a 10-year reauthorization until July 1, 2031. Among other recommendations made in the report, DLS recommended that statute be amended to require the board to report annually on relevant disciplinary data in order to improve transparency and oversight of the board’s disciplinary activities. The bill implements this recommendation.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 549 (Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee) - Environment and Transportation.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Agriculture; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 17, 2020  
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