

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 Third Reader

House Bill 378 (Delegate Kerr)  
 Health and Government Operations

Finance

Maryland Health Care Commission – Palliative Care Services – Workgroup

This bill requires the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) to convene a workgroup to study and make recommendations to improve palliative care services in the State. The workgroup must include representatives of hospice and palliative care providers, health care facilities, patient advocacy groups, and health insurers. The workgroup must submit an interim report by July 1, 2023, and a final report by November 1, 2023, including the need for any legislative initiatives, to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect October 1, 2022, and terminates September 30, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** MHCC special fund expenditures increase by approximately \$65,000 in FY 2023 only for contractual services to complete the required study and reports, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	65,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$65,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The workgroup must examine (1) the state of palliative care services offered in the State; (2) the capacity of palliative care providers; (3) geographic areas where significant gaps in palliative care services may exist; (4) opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders; (5) the feasibility of financial support for a long-term expansion of palliative care services, including insurance coverage; (6) a plan for ongoing data collection to monitor and improve palliative care services; (7) engagement strategies for educating individuals to make informed decisions about preferred care when faced with serious illness; and (8) any other strategies that would improve palliative care services.

**Current Law:** MHCC is an independent commission within the Maryland Department of Health with a mission to plan for health system needs, promote informed decision making, increase accountability, and improve access in a rapidly changing health care environment by providing timely and accurate information on availability, cost, and quality of services to policymakers, purchasers, providers, and the public.

Under Code of Maryland Regulations 10.07.01.01, “palliative care” means specialized medical care for individuals with serious illnesses or conditions that (1) is focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness or condition, whatever the diagnosis; (2) has the goal of improving quality of life for the patient, patient’s family, and other caregivers; (3) is provided at any age and at any stage in a serious illness or condition; and (4) can be provided along with curative treatment.

**State Expenditures:** MHCC special fund expenditures increase by approximately \$65,000 in fiscal 2023 only for contractual services to complete the required study and compile the required reports. MHCC advises that contractual services will be required to (1) assess the capacity of palliative care providers and determine the scope and capacity of services offered by different provider types; (2) analyze insurance claim data to assess the scope of services provided, variations among different regions of the State, and disparities that exist in access to palliative care services; (3) identify approaches for financing palliative care services; and (4) identify recognized or experimental quality and outcome measures suitable for program monitoring.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 21, 2022  
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