

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1029 (Delegate Valentino-Smith)
 Appropriations

Maryland Higher Education Commission – Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee – Establishment

This bill establishes the Access to Mental Health Advisory Committee within the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). MHEC must provide staff for the committee. By December 1, 2022, and by each December 1 thereafter, MHEC must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and specified committees of the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$43,200 in FY 2023 to hire a half-time employee to staff the commission. Any expense reimbursements for members of the committee are assumed to be minimal and absorbable with existing budgeted resources. Future years reflect annualization, inflation, and ongoing expenses. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	43,200	48,800	50,200	51,600	53,100
Net Effect	(\$43,200)	(\$48,800)	(\$50,200)	(\$51,600)	(\$53,100)

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The committee must:

- study the policies and procedures adopted by institutions of higher education in the State regarding access to mental health care and the prevention and treatment of mental illness in students;
- examine the challenges for institutions of higher education in meeting the demand for mental health services;
- review best practices for accessing off-campus mental health services;
- review best practices for, and barriers to, the implementation of counseling services, including crisis, personal, mental health, sexual violence, and substance abuse counseling;
- review and identify the best models for providing mental health services, including stand-alone centers, centers with integrated student health services, comprehensive services, case management, and crisis resources;
- identify concerns in rural areas and workforce shortage areas; and
- study and make recommendations regarding any other matters the committee considers appropriate.

Further, the committee must make recommendations regarding:

- ways to reduce costs and barriers to providing access to mental health services on campus;
- the use of telemedicine and video conferencing in the provision of mental health services;
- the use of hotlines and other means to disseminate information to students related to mental health services on and off campus, including information concerning availability and fees; and
- the implementation of general mental health counseling services and specialized counseling services.

The bill establishes the membership of the committee. The committee must elect a chair from among its members. The committee may elect other officers as determined by the committee. The committee must meet six times per year.

A member of the committee may not receive compensation as a member of the committee but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses.

State Expenditures: MHEC advises that it does not have staff to address non-academic and non-financial aid services provided at Maryland’s colleges and universities. The Department of Legislative Services concurs that the duties of the committee are broad and outside the normal realm of MHEC duties; moreover, they are ongoing. Thus, general fund expenditures increase by \$45,195 in fiscal 2023, which reflects the cost of hiring one half-time employee to staff the committee and assumes a 90-day start-up delay from the bill’s July 1, 2022 effective date. The estimate includes a half-time salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$36,249
Operating Expenses	<u>6,946</u>
Total FY 2023 State Expenditures	\$43,195

As the committee is a permanent entity with ongoing review and recommendation duties, future year expenditures reflect a half-time salary with an annual increase and employee turnover and ongoing operating expenses.

Any expense reimbursements for committee members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Institutions can provide any requested information using existing resources.

This estimate does not reflect any policy changes made by institutions of higher education in response to the findings and recommendations of the committee.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: SB 937 (Senator Eckardt) - Rules.

Information Source(s): Maryland Higher Education Commission; Morgan State University; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 13, 2022
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