

SENATE BILL 786

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By: **Senator McKay**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2024

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force on Access to Pharmacy Services and the Impact of Telepharmacy in**
3 **Maryland**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force on Access to Pharmacy Services and the
5 Impact of Telepharmacy in Maryland to analyze access to pharmacy services,
6 identify barriers to pharmacy services and telepharmacy, and make
7 recommendations on methods to increase access to pharmacy services and the use of
8 telepharmacy in the State; and generally relating to pharmacy services and
9 telepharmacy.

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
11 That:

12 (a) There is a Task Force on Access to Pharmacy Services and the Impact of
13 Telepharmacy in Maryland.

14 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

15 (1) the Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services, or the Deputy
16 Secretary's designee;

17 (2) the Secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, or the
18 Secretary's designee;

19 (3) the Dean of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, or the
20 Dean's designee;

21 (4) a pharmacist who serves a rural community in the State, appointed by
22 the cochairs of the Task Force; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (5) one representative from each of the following organizations, designated
2 by the head of the organization:

3 (i) the Rural Maryland Council;

4 (ii) the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, who is
5 knowledgeable about community college–based pharmacy technician programs;

6 (iii) the State Board of Pharmacy;

7 (iv) the Maryland Association of Counties; and

8 (v) the Maryland Rural Health Association.

9 (c) The Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services, or the Deputy Secretary's
10 designee, and the Dean of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, or the Dean's
11 designee, shall cochair the Task Force.

12 (d) The Maryland Department of Health and the Department of Legislative
13 Services jointly shall provide staff for the Task Force.

14 (e) A member of the Task Force:

15 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

16 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
17 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

18 (f) The Task Force shall:

19 (1) analyze access to pharmacy services for all residents of the State with
20 a focus on rural communities;

21 (2) identify areas of the State where a significant number of residents
22 travel more than 10 miles to obtain needed medications and the impact of these “pharmacy
23 deserts” on population health;

24 (3) identify barriers to pharmacists providing pharmacy services and
25 telepharmacy in the areas identified under item (2) of this subsection, including:

26 (i) regulatory requirements in the State;

27 (ii) the location of pharmacies, focusing on a lack of transportation
28 options in rural communities; and

29 (iii) language and cultural barriers;

1 (4) analyze the specific impact of each barrier identified under item (3) of
2 this subsection;

3 (5) assess options to eliminate the barriers identified under item (3) of this
4 subsection, including by:

5 (i) assessing existing educational opportunities, if any, for
6 pharmacists and pharmacy-related occupations and determining the feasibility of
7 expanding educational opportunities in the State for pharmacists and the study of
8 pharmacy-related occupations, including pharmacy technicians; and

9 (ii) examining other states that have lessened restrictions on
10 telepharmacy and whether access to pharmacy services improved in those states; and

11 (6) make recommendations regarding methods for increasing access to
12 pharmacy services and the use of telepharmacy in the State.

13 (g) (1) On or before May 1, 2025, the Task Force shall submit an interim report
14 of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of
15 the State Government Article, the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and
16 Government Operations Committee.

17 (2) On or before December 1, 2025, the Task Force shall submit a final
18 report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with §
19 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the Senate Finance Committee and the House
20 Health and Government Operations Committee.

21 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
22 1, 2024. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of June 30, 2026,
23 this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and
24 of no further force and effect.