

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 740

Finance

(Senator Folden, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Health Care Facilities - Service Member Community Members (SFC Matthew Fast Act)

This bill authorizes each “health care facility” to screen each patient for information on the patient’s eligibility as a “service member community member” and include the information in the patient’s medical record. For the purpose of improving health care equity for service member community members, each health care facility may identify service member community members as a vulnerable population and comply with the standards associated with the National Patient Safety Goal to Improve Health Care Equity established by the Joint Commission.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) can implement the bill using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Health care facility” means a facility or an office where health care is provided to patients by a health care practitioner or group of health care practitioners licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by law to provide health care services. “Health care facility” includes a hospital, a freestanding medical facility, a nursing facility, a residential treatment center, a rehabilitation facility, and a facility operated by MDH, the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), or a health officer.

“Service member community member” means a service member, a veteran, the spouse of a service member or veteran, or a child or stepchild of a service member or veteran.

“Service member” means an individual who is a member of the uniformed services or a reserve component of the uniformed services.

Current Law: MDH owns and operates [various health care facilities](#), including inpatient psychiatric hospitals, regional institutes for children and adolescents, and developmental disabilities centers. BHA specifically operates five psychiatric facilities. Some local health officers oversee clinics at local health departments.

“Hospital” means an institution that (1) has a group of at least five physicians who are organized as medical staff for the institution; (2) maintains facilities to provide, under the supervision of medical staff, diagnostic and treatment services for two or more unrelated individuals; and (3) admits or retains the individuals for overnight care.

“Freestanding medical facility” means a facility (1) in which medical and health services are provided; (2) is physically separate from a hospital or hospital grounds, as specified; (3) that is an administrative part of a hospital; or (4) that meets the requirements for provider-based status under the certification for an affiliated hospital as set forth by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

“Nursing facility” means a facility that provides skilled nursing care and related services, rehabilitation services, and health related care and services above the level of room and board needed on a regular basis in accordance with the federal Social Security Act.

“Residential treatment center” means a psychiatric institution that provides campus-based intensive and extensive evaluation and treatment of children and adolescents with severe and chronic emotional disturbances who require a self-contained therapeutic, educational, and recreational program in a residential setting.

“Comprehensive rehabilitation facility” means (1) any person that provides or holds himself out as providing comprehensive physical rehabilitation services on an outpatient basis, or (2) a hospital that is licensed as a special rehabilitation hospital.

Service Members

Pursuant to 37 U.S.C. § 101, “uniformed services” means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Public Health Service. “Reserve component” means the Army National Guard of the United States, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard of the United States, Air Force Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service. Under the State Government Article, except as otherwise provided, “veteran” means an individual who served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, other than for training, and was discharged or released

under conditions other than dishonorable. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. § 101, “veteran” means a person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

Additional Comments: [The Joint Commission](#) is a nonprofit organization that evaluates health care organizations and encourages safe and effective health care. The Joint Commission’s [National Patient Safety Goal to Improve Health Care Equity](#) aims to identify and address disparities in health care quality and access.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Health; Department of Veterans and Military Families; Military Department; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 2, 2025
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