

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 19
Finance

(Senator Ellis)

Maryland Commission on Women's Health Advancement - Establishment

This bill establishes the Maryland Commission on Women's Health Advancement to study the feasibility of establishing (1) a State women's hospital in Southern Maryland and (2) a statewide clinical network to advance women's health by ensuring a continuum of care that addresses the unique health challenges faced by women across their lifespans. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) must jointly staff the commission. The commission must submit (1) an initial action plan by January 1, 2027; (2) annual interim reports by July 1 of each year; and (3) a final report of its findings and recommendations on the need, funding, location, implementation plan, and structure for the State women's hospital and clinical network by December 1, 2032. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026, and terminates June 30, 2033.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDH general fund expenditures increase by *at least* \$211,800 in FY 2027 for staff and contractual services, as discussed below. Future years reflect ongoing costs. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	211,800	201,500	207,200	213,000	218,800
Net Effect	(\$211,800)	(\$201,500)	(\$207,200)	(\$213,000)	(\$218,800)

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:

Commission Membership

The commission comprises a member of the Senate of Maryland, a member of the House of Delegates, the Attorney General (or their designee), as well as patient advocates and health care professionals and experts, among others. The Governor must designate a chair from among the members.

A commission member serves for a seven-year term. Commission members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under standard State travel regulations.

Commission Responsibilities

The commission must:

- analyze the need for a centralized hospital for women with outpatient clinic locations throughout the State;
- examine existing health care gaps;
- in collaboration with MHCC, (1) assess its financial viability for a State women's hospital and associated outpatient clinics, and (2) initiate a certificate of need for the hospital and clinics;
- investigate other approaches to a single-site hospital, including a hub network; and
- consult with a broad range of stakeholders, including providers, patient advocates, and community organizations.

Current Law: The Maryland Commission for Women in the Department of Human Services works to advance solutions and to expand social, political, and economic opportunities for all women. The commission must:

- stimulate and encourage study and review of the status of women in the State;
- strengthen home life by directing attention to critical problems confronting women as wives, mothers, homemakers, and workers;
- recommend methods of overcoming discrimination against women in public and private employment;
- encourage women to become candidates for public office;
- promote more effective methods for enabling women to develop their skills, continue their education, and to be retrained;

- secure appropriate recognition of women's accomplishments and contributions to the State;
- work to develop healthy attitudes within the framework of the commission's responsibilities; and
- inform the Executive and Legislative branches on issues concerning women, including offering testimony on these issues.

MHCC is an independent commission within MDH 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. MHCC's special fund consists of user fees assessed on health care payors, hospitals, nursing homes, and health care practitioners. User fees must be used exclusively to cover the actual documented direct costs of fulfilling the statutory and regulatory duties of MHCC, including administrative costs incurred by MDH on behalf of the commission. The total user fees assessed by MHCC are currently capped by statute at \$20.0 million annually.

State Fiscal Effect: The Office of the Attorney General, the Morgan State University School of Community Health and Policy, and the University of Maryland School of Public Health can serve on the commission with existing budgeted resources.

MDH advises that the requirement for MDH and MHCC to jointly staff the commission requires additional personnel from both MHCC and MDH's Prevention and Health Promotion Administration (PHPA). Additionally, the commission's work of analyzing gaps, conducting financial assessments, and preparing reports requires contractual services. Under these assumptions, MDH advises that general/special fund expenditures increase by \$323,500 in fiscal 2027 to hire one health policy analyst and one MHCC program administrator to staff the commission, as well as \$100,000 in annual contractual services. Out-year expenditures range from \$302,059 to \$333,611.

While the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) concurs that additional staff and contractual services are needed, DLS disagrees that *both* MHCC and PHPA need additional staff to support the commission. Instead, DLS advises that MDH general fund expenditures increase by at least \$211,750 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill's July 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one health policy analyst in PHPA to staff the commission and \$100,000 in annual contractual services for required data analyses and financial assessments. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$101,915
Annual Contractual Services	100,000
Other Operating Expenses	<u>9,835</u>
Total FY 2027 State Expenditures	\$211,750

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

To the extent that more resources are needed at MHCC to support the commission, special fund expenditures increase for personnel and potentially additional contractual services beginning as early as fiscal 2027. MHCC advises that its fiscal 2027 budget fully expends all available funds collected by the commission through user fees and that its current user fee cap amount does not provide room to fund additional large-scale efforts such as proposed under this bill.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Office of the Attorney General; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 27, 2026
caw/jc

Analysis by: Eliana R. Prober

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510