

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1297 (Delegate O'Donnell, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Calvert County and St. Mary's County - Task Force to Study the Use and Trade
of Illicit Opioids in Traditionally Rural Counties

This emergency bill establishes the Task Force to Study the Use and Trade of Illicit Opioids in Calvert County and St. Mary's County. By September 30, 2014, the task force must submit an interim progress report to specified parties. On or before December 1, 2015, the task force must submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to specified parties. The Calvert County Health Department and the St. Mary's County Health Department must provide staff for the task force.

The bill terminates June 30, 2015.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State operations and finances are not materially affected.

Local Effect: Minimal increase in expenditures for the St. Mary's County Health Department and the Calvert County Health Department for administrative expenses associated with the task force. Staffing can be provided using existing budgeted resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The 15-member task force includes 1 member of the Senate of Maryland who represents both Calvert County and St. Mary's County, as appointed by the President of the Senate. The task force also includes 1 member of the House of

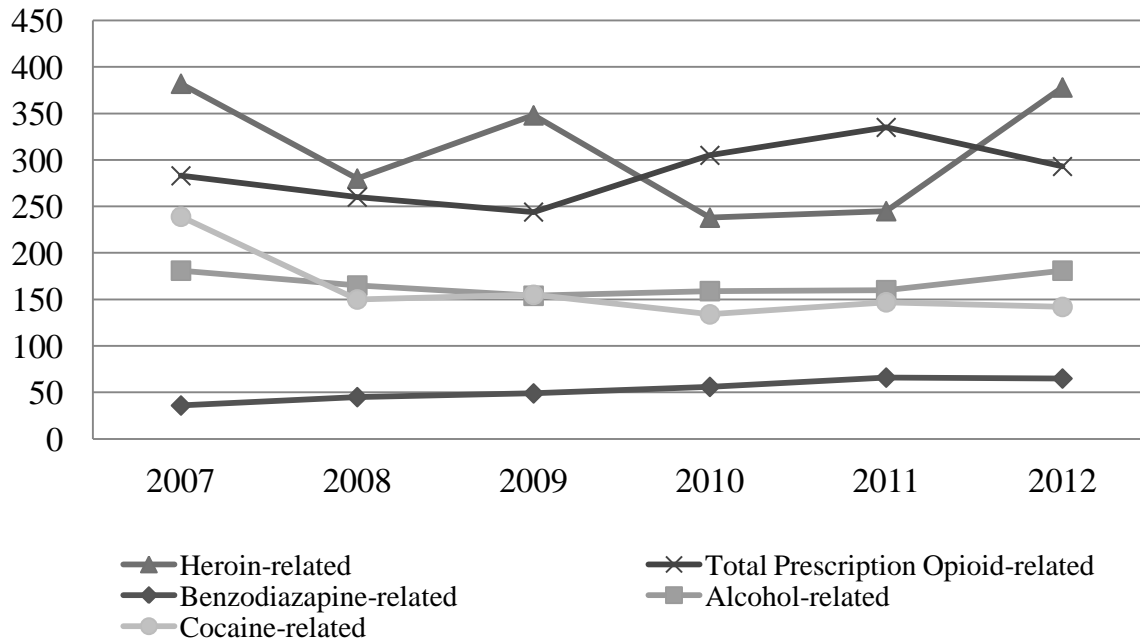
Delegates who represents both Calvert County and St. Mary's County, as appointed by the Speaker of the House. The Public Health Officer of Calvert County and the Public Health Officer of St. Mary's County must serve as co-chairs of the task force. A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses.

The task force must (1) conduct a comprehensive assessment of the scope of the problem of opioid abuse in Calvert and St. Mary's counties; (2) determine what State and local government resources are available for treatment services and their adequacy; (3) evaluate strategies to reduce recidivism rates in the criminal justice system, including the use or expansion of existing adult and juvenile drug courts; and (4) make recommendations about State and local resources as well as existing and future efforts necessary to address problems stemming from opioid abuse. The task force must hold public meetings and briefings in the affected counties as necessary and may request subject matter experts, interested parties, and residents of the affected counties to testify.

The interim and final reports must be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, the Board of County Commissioners of St. Mary's County, and both county delegations to the General Assembly.

Background: According to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration, drug overdoses are a serious public health challenge in Maryland and across the country. During the past decade, national increases in the number of fatal overdoses have been driven primarily by an epidemic of pharmaceutical opioid abuse. In Maryland, deaths related to pharmaceutical opioids increased during this time, while those involving illicit drugs declined. However, in 2012, Maryland experienced a significant shift from pharmaceutical opioids to heroin, mirroring a trend being reported in other states. This trend is shown below in **Exhibit 1**.

**Exhibit 1
Intoxication Deaths in Maryland
2007-2012**



Source: Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *Drug and Alcohol Intoxication Deaths in Maryland, 2007-2012*

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's County, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 24, 2014
ncs/ljm

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