

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 982 (Senator Ellis, *et al.*)
Finance and Budget and Taxation

Commission to Study Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Funding

This bill establishes the Commission to Study Non-emergency Medical Transportation Funding, which is to be jointly staffed by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). By June 30, 2020, the commission must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and specified committees of the General Assembly. A member of the commission may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2019, and terminates June 30, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any reimbursement for commission members and staffing costs are considered to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission must (1) study Maryland's requirements for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) funding and the implications that the current demand for NEMT funding may have on other forms of transportation provided by locally operated transit systems (LOTS) and (2) make recommendations regarding the criteria for choosing which medical providers would be required to reimburse costs related

to a patient's use of NEMT as well as the best methodology for collecting and distributing NEMT reimbursements to LOTS providers. In undertaking the study and making recommendations, the commission must:

- measure NEMT funding requirements relative to the revenue for NEMT and the total revenue for all LOTS activities;
- compare NEMT service volume to that of other LOTS services on a per person, per hour, and per dollar basis;
- determine the impact of NEMT costs on the existing and projected future status of LOTS funding adequacy and the feasibility and methodology of assessing medical providers for the reimbursement of certain NEMT costs; and
- consider any other data the commission deems necessary.

Current Law/Background: NEMT is available for Medicaid recipients who have no other means of getting to their medical appointments. NEMT typically covers ambulatory, ambulance, aero medical, and wheelchair transportation. Transportation services are provided by local jurisdictions. Generally, transportation services must be scheduled a minimum of 24 hours in advance, with the exception of hospital discharges. The Governor's proposed fiscal 2020 budget includes \$49.4 million for Medicaid NEMT, which is typically distributed to local health departments in the form of transportation grants.

Workgroup on Rural Health Care Delivery

Chapter 420 of 2016 established a workgroup on rural health care delivery to oversee a study of rural health care needs in specified counties. The workgroup's October 2017 [report](#) recommended, among other things, expansion of non-Medicaid and non-emergency transportation and promotion of innovative approaches to non-emergent transportation in rural areas, such as the use of commercial transport like Uber and Lyft where transportation deficits are the most acute. The report also recommended that MDH, in consultation with MDOT, develop standards for non-emergency programs based on best practices. The workgroup found that reimbursement for NEMT is extremely uneven, and suggested that greater effort be placed on equitable funding. The report noted that residents and local governments would benefit from such standardization and that regulatory and or statutory changes may be necessary.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1537 of 2018 was withdrawn after a hearing in the House Health and Government Operations Committee.

Cross File: HB 366 (Delegate Krimm) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Comptroller's Office; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Department of Transportation; Maryland Association of Counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 26, 2019
mag/jc

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