

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 793 (Delegate Cullison)
 Health and Government Operations

Task Force to Study 2-1-1 Maryland

This bill establishes the Task Force to Study 2-1-1 in Maryland. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must provide staff for the task force. Members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget. The task force must submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2019. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019, and terminates June 30, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by *at least* \$22,300 in FY 2020 only to staff the task force. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	22,300	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$22,300)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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:

The task force must:

- compile and analyze information about the current use of 2-1-1 Maryland;
- compile information on the use of toll-free numbers by State agencies;
- analyze the resources currently available to 2-1-1 Maryland callers and identify how these resources may be increased;
- consider whether the Health and Human Services Referral Board should be repealed; and
- make legislative recommendations regarding the governance structure, funding, reporting, and accountability of 2-1-1 Maryland.

Current Law/Background:

Maryland 2-1-1

The three-digit number 2-1-1 is established in statute as the primary information and referral telephone number for health and human services in the State. 2-1-1 Maryland is a private, nonprofit organization that maintains an information and referral service network that is available to Maryland residents via telephone and Internet. 2-1-1 Maryland offers 24/7 guidance in accessing health, crisis, and social services. The Health and Human Services Referral Board within MDH provides oversight and guidance to the 2-1-1 Maryland system.

In fiscal 2018, 2-1-1 Maryland responded to 359,939 calls and connected callers to more than 6,000 nonprofit and public health and human service programs.

Health and Human Services Referral Board

The board must (1) maintain public information available from State agencies, programs, and departments that provide health and human services; (2) support projects and activities that further the development of 2-1-1 Maryland; (3) examine and make recommendations to maximize the use of information technology in expanding the availability of 2-1-1 services throughout the State; (4) evaluate the performance of 2-1-1 Maryland call centers; (5) make recommendations to 2-1-1 Maryland regarding call center performance and service quality; (6) make recommendations regarding corrective action by a call center, as appropriate; and (7) submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on the board's activities.

The board’s December 2018 report offers data on 2-1-1 Maryland call volumes and caller needs from fiscal 2013 through 2018. In the report, the board recommends that a study be conducted to (1) examine opportunities for improving coordination among statewide hotlines; (2) examine issues related to the governance structure of 2-1-1 Maryland; (3) assess the capability of 2-1-1 Maryland to provide services in the event of a disaster; and (4) assess funding for 2-1-1 Maryland. The board indicates that MDH has offered to provide staff for the recommended study. In addition, the board recommends a task force, facilitated by the Department of Information Technology, to assess 2-1-1 Maryland’s technology infrastructure.

State Expenditures: MDH advises that contractual assistance is required in order to convene the task force and complete the required report (due within five months – on December 1, 2019). MDH estimates assume the cost of hiring one half-time (50%) contractual program manager to staff the task force and one half-time (50%) contractual data analyst to compile data on the use of 2-1-1 Maryland and toll-free numbers by State agencies and prepare the required report. In addition, MDH estimates assume \$200,000 in contractual services for completion of a needs assessment and \$20,000 in travel expenses related to task force meetings.

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS), however, advises that MDH can meet the bill’s staffing and reporting requirements with one part-time (50%) contractual staff person. In addition, DLS advises that any travel expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Thus, MDH general fund expenditures increase by *at least* \$22,259 in fiscal 2020, which accounts for the bill’s July 1, 2019 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one half-time (50%) contractual employee for five months to staff the task force. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, and operating expenses. If additional contractual services are required for additional data analysis and/or completion of a needs assessment, expenditures may increase.

Contractual Position	0.5
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$17,238
Operating Expenses	<u>5,021</u>
Total FY 2020 State Expenditures	\$22,259

This analysis assumes elimination of the contractual position December 1, 2019, following submission of the required report.

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State's implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Health; 2-1-1 Maryland; Department of Legislative Services

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mm/jc

Analysis by: Elizabeth J. Allison

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