

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 863 (Delegate Alston)  
Health and Government Operations

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State Board of Nursing - Technology Upgrade Study

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This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to study options for upgrading the licensing and telephone systems used by the State Board of Nursing (MBON). By October 1, 2024, MDH must submit an action plan to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee for (1) the acquisition of a new electronic licensing system and a new telephone system for MBON and (2) MBON to appropriately staff the telephone system. By March 1, 2025, MDH must report to the committees on the status of the acquisition of a new electronic licensing system and a new telephone system. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2024.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** MDH can complete the required study using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Bill Summary:** MDH must study options for upgrading the licensing system used by MBON to allow (1) all initial applications and renewal applications for licenses and certifications issued by MBON to be processed online and (2) the status of an application to be tracked by the applicant using the Internet.

MDH must study options for upgrading the MBON telephone system to allow (1) all calls to be routed to the appropriate MBON unit; (2) voice messages to be left outside of office hours; and (3) staff to track call wait times.

**Current Law:** Generally, an individual must be licensed and/or certified by MBON to practice specified nursing duties in the State. MBON is responsible for the regulation and oversight of nursing professionals in the State, ensuring that nurses comply with federal and State laws governing the profession through the regulation and oversight of education and training programs and by taking disciplinary action against licensees and certificate holders when warranted.

Chapters 222 and 223 of 2023 extended MBON's termination date by two years to July 1, 2025, during which the Secretary of Health is granted authority over specified infrastructure operations of the board. MBON special funds may not be used for such operations. Should the board's termination date be further extended, authority over infrastructure operations reverts to MBON on July 1, 2025.

Chapters 222 and 223 also required MBON to hire an external consultant to conduct an independent evaluation of the board and develop an action plan to implement the recommendations identified in the consultant's [report](#) to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee by September 1, 2023. The report noted that current systems used for telephone, application tracking and management, and reporting are inefficient.

**Additional Comments:** On January 3, 2023, the Executive Director of the Department of Legislative Services directed the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) to conduct a performance evaluation of MBON. OPEGA outlined [observations and recommendations](#) related to both the electronic licensing system and the telephone system.

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### **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 Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 22, 2024  
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