

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 1117
Health

(Delegate Lopez, *et al.*)

Finance

Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council and the
Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs - Recommendations for
Elopement Response Devices

This bill authorizes the Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council to recommend the use of elopement response devices as safety tools for individuals who are at risk of elopement because of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs is similarly authorized to recommend the use of elopement response devices as safety tools for individuals who are at risk of elopement because of autism. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill does not substantively change State activities or operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: "Elopement" means behavior in which an individual with a cognitive, developmental, or neurological condition leaves or attempts to leave a safe and supervised area without the ability to recognize or avoid risk or the ability to return safely without assistance. "Elopement" includes wandering that creates the risk of harm, injury, or death.

"Elopement response device" means an assistive technology device or a medical safety device that is (1) a wearable, portable, or integrated electronic device or system that uses

global positioning system technology, radio frequency identification technology, Bluetooth, or similar technology to support the identification, monitoring, or rapid location of an individual at risk of elopement due to a cognitive, developmental, neurological, or memory-related condition and (2) used for purposes of patient safety, functional independence, and participation in home or community settings. “Elopement response device” includes (1) a device that has features that enable secure storage and transmission of critical individual information to caregivers, emergency personnel, or first responders to facilitate timely, informed, and coordinated response in elopement emergency situations and (2) any electronic monitoring services necessary for the device to function as a medical safety and assistive tool.

Current Law:

Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Council

The council must (1) update the State Plan on Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders and advocate for the State plan; (2) examine the needs of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders and their caregivers and identify methods through which the State can most effectively and efficiently assist in meeting those needs; (3) advise the Governor and the General Assembly on policy, funding, regulatory, and other issues related to individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders and their caregivers; and (4) develop and promote strategies to encourage brain health and reduce cognitive decline.

Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs

Chapter 341 of 2020 established a State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs in the Maryland Department of Disabilities. The advisory stakeholder group must work with the State Coordinator to (1) identify and evaluate existing services for individuals with autism and their families; (2) develop a strategic plan for addressing autism-related needs in the State; (3) promote, monitor, and evaluate implementation of the strategic plan; and (4) recommend and implement changes to the strategic plan.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Office of the Attorney General; Department of Budget and Management; Maryland Department of Disabilities; Maryland Department of Health; Maryland Insurance Administration; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 13, 2026
jg/ljm Third Reader - March 31, 2026
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 31, 2026

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