

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1527 (Delegate Arikan)  
 Health

**Complementary and Alternative Health Care - Practice Authorized**  
**(Complementary and Alternative Health Care Practice Act)**

This bill authorizes an individual to practice “complementary or alternative health care” without obtaining a license, certification, or other authorization under the Health Occupations Article. A practitioner of complementary or alternative health care must (1) provide every client with specified written notice; (2) obtain signed acknowledgement that the client has received the notice; (3) retain the acknowledgment for at least two years; and (4) provide the client with a copy of the acknowledgment. An individual acting within the scope of a license, certificate, or other authorization under the Health Occupations Article is not subject to these requirements. Unless otherwise licensed, certified, or authorized, an individual practicing complementary or alternative health care may not (1) represent to the public that the individual is a licensed health care practitioner; (2) recommend discontinuation of prescribed medical treatment; (3) perform surgery; (4) expose another to x-ray radiation; (5) set a fracture; (6) prescribe or dispense a prescription drug or controlled substance; or (7) manipulate a spine or other joint. The bill may not be construed to waive or limit any common law or statutory claim for relief that a person may bring against a complementary or alternative health care practitioner.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Maryland Department of Health (MDH) special fund expenditures increase by at least \$244,300 beginning in FY 2027 for staff, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	244,300	279,300	292,800	306,300	319,800
Net Effect	(\$244,300)	(\$279,300)	(\$292,800)	(\$306,300)	(\$319,800)

*Note: ( ) = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Meaningful.

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## **Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** “Complementary or alternative health care” includes acupressure; anthroposophy; aromatherapy; ayurveda; cranial sacral therapy; culturally traditional healing practices; detoxification practices and therapies; energetic healing; polarity therapy; folk practices; healing practices using food, food supplements, nutrients, and the physical forces of heat, cold, water, touch, and light; Gerson therapy; colostrum therapy; healing touch; herbology or herbalism; homeopathy; iridology; bodywork; meditation; mind-body healing practices; reflexology and reiki; traditional naturopathy; noninvasive instrumentalities; traditional Oriental practices; qigong; and energy healing.

The written notice provided to clients must contain (1) the name, title, business address, and telephone number of the practitioner; (2) a statement indicating whether the practitioner holds a license, certificate, or other authorization issued by a health occupations board; (3) a description of the service that the practitioner provides; and (4) any educational credential, training, experience, or other qualification held by the practitioner.

The bill adds exceptions to the requirement to be licensed (or certified) by 19 or the 20 health occupations boards for an individual practicing alternative or complementary medicine. **Exhibit 1** lists the exceptions made under the bill.

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## **Exhibit 1**

### **Exceptions to Licensure**

<b><u>Board</u></b>	<b><u>Exempt From Requirement to Be Licensed to Practice</u></b>
Acupuncture	Acupuncture
Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Music Therapists	Audiology, hearing aid dispensing, speech-language pathology, or music therapy, or assist in the practice of speech-language pathology or audiology
Chiropractic	Chiropractic
Dental	Dentistry, dental hygiene, dental radiation technology
Dietetic Practice	Dietetics
Massage Therapy	Massage therapy
Nursing	Registered nursing, licensed practical nursing, advanced practice registered nursing, nursing assistant, dialysis technician, medication technician, electrology (including teach an electrology education program), direct-entry midwifery, and certified midwifery
Long-Term Care Administrators	Nursing home administrator or assisted living manager
Occupational Therapy	Occupational therapy or limited occupational therapy
Optometry	Optometry
Pharmacy	Pharmacy, pharmacy technician, registered pharmacy intern
Physical Therapy	Physical therapy or limited physical therapy
Physicians	Medicine, respiratory care, radiation therapy, radiography, nuclear medicine technology, radiology assistance, polysomnography, athletic training, perfusion, naturopathic medicine, genetic counseling, physician assistant
Podiatric	Podiatry
Professional Counselors and Therapists	Alcohol and drug counseling, marriage and family therapy, professional art therapy, professional counseling, behavior analysis
Psychologists	Psychology or psychology associate
Social Work Examiners	Social work or clinical social work
Residential Child Care Program Professionals	Program administrator or residential child and youth practitioner
Environmental Health Specialists	Environmental health specialist

Source: Department of Legislative Services

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**Current Law:** Twenty health occupations boards share responsibility for regulating various health professions in Maryland. With specified exceptions, an individual must be licensed, certified, registered, or permitted by the respective health occupations board before the individual may practice in the State. Licensure, certification, registration, and permit requirements vary by profession but typically require, among other things, specified education and experience, passage of a national and/or State examination, and a criminal history records check.

Under most health occupations boards, an individual may not practice, attempt to practice, or offer to practice a health occupation unless licensed, certified, or registered by the appropriate board. Additionally, an individual may not misrepresent to the public that the individual is authorized to practice the health occupation in the State. An individual who violates these provisions is guilty of a misdemeanor and may be subject to a fine and/or imprisonment, as well as a civil fine.

**State Expenditures:** Some health occupations boards advise that the bill may lead to more complaints requiring investigations. To handle complaints, the Maryland Board of Pharmacy (MBOP) and the Maryland Board of Physicians (MBP) advise that they each require one investigator and additional legal support. Thus, MDH special fund expenditures increase by \$244,281 total in fiscal 2027, which reflects both MBP and MBOP staff needs.

Several other boards indicated that the bill would have no fiscal impact. To the extent that future need arises for investigative or legal staff to handle complaints, special fund expenditures for other health occupations boards may increase by an indeterminate amount beginning as early as fiscal 2027.

#### *Board of Physicians*

MBP special fund expenditures increase by \$125,559 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one full-time investigator and one part-time (50%) legal counsel to handle any complaints related to misrepresentation or practice. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Positions	1.5
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$108,319
Operating Expenses	<u>17,240</u>
<b>Total FY 2027 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$125,559</b>

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

*Board of Pharmacy*

MBOP special fund expenditures increase by \$118,722 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one full-time investigator and one part-time (50%) counsel to handle any complaints related to misrepresentation or practice. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Positions	1.5
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$101,482
Operating Expenses	<u>17,240</u>
<b>Total FY 2027 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$118,722</b>

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

**Small Business Effect:** Individuals may start small businesses in alternative or complementary health care without a license.

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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 - March 3, 2026  
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