

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

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

Senate Bill 611  
 Finance

(Senator Mautz)

Rules and Executive Nominations

**Maryland Department of Health - Study on Maryland Medical Assistance  
 Program Reimbursement of Hospice Room and Board Services**

This bill requires the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) and the Maryland Medicaid Program to jointly study the impact of requiring Medicaid to provide reimbursement for room and board services provided by a hospice house. By December 1, 2026, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must report its findings to specified committees of the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Medicaid expenditures increase by as much as \$52,000 (50% general funds, 50% federal funds) in FY 2027 only to complete the required report. Federal fund revenues increase accordingly.

| (in dollars) | FY 2027    | FY 2028 | FY 2029 | FY 2030 | FY 2031 |
|--------------|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| FF Revenue   | \$26,000   | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     |
| GF/FF Exp.   | \$52,000   | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     |
| Net Effect   | (\$26,000) | \$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 study must (1) analyze overall Medicaid savings per enrollee death associated with hospice care utilization during the last six months of life compared with

costs associated with other services provided to Medicaid recipients during the last six months of life, as specified; (2) analyze the projected fiscal impact of the provision of reimbursement for hospice house room and board services, including any potential offsets or net savings; (3) examine how reimbursement for room and board services would affect hospital readmission rates, improve hospice length of stay, improve early access to hospice services, result in a reduction in deaths in hospitals, and result in a reduction in emergency department utilization; and (4) include a comparison of other states that provide reimbursement for hospice house room and board services, as specified.

**Current Law:** Under Maryland regulations (COMAR 10.07.22.02), “hospice house” means a residence operated by a Maryland licensed hospice care program that provides home-based hospice services to hospice patients in a home-like environment and the care is not billed as general inpatient care.

Maryland Medicaid covers hospice services for patients whose physicians have certified that their life expectancy is six months or less. Medicaid covers the following hospice services: nursing care; medical social services; physicians’ services; counseling services; home health aide; medical appliances and supplies (including drugs and biologicals); and physical and occupational therapy. In general, the services must be related to the palliation or management of the recipient’s terminal illness, symptom control, or to enable the individual to maintain activities of daily living and basic functional skills. Short-term inpatient care is covered if it is provided in a participating hospice unit or a participating hospital or nursing facility that meets hospice standards.

Maryland Medicaid only provides reimbursement for room and board to hospice participants residing in skilled nursing facilities. The per diem rate is 95% of the skilled nursing facility rate. This complies with federal law, which prohibits Medicaid from reimbursing for room and board except in certain medical institutions. A hospice house is not a skilled nursing facility and does not qualify for one of the limited exceptions to this prohibition. Thus, should Medicaid reimburse for room and board services provided by a hospice house, it would require 100% State general funds.

**State Fiscal Effect:** MDH advises that Medicaid expenditures increase by as much as \$52,000 (50% general funds, 50% federal funds) in fiscal 2027 only for contractual services to prepare the report. Federal fund revenues increase accordingly. MHCC advises it can participate in the study with existing resources, although the timeframe to do so may present operational challenges.

## Additional Information

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

**Designated Cross File:** HB 1151 (Delegate Hutchinson, *et al.*) - Health.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 20, 2026  
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