



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

SENATE BILL NO. 31

PRINTERS NO. 12

PRIME SPONSOR: Scavello

COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20
Tobacco Settlement Fund	\$0	\$0

SUMMARY: Senate Bill 31, Printer's Number 12 establishes the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program and allocates funding from the Tobacco Settlement Fund. This legislation is effective in 60 days.

ANALYSIS: This legislation amends the Tobacco Settlement Act by adding a new section establishing the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program within the Department of Health (DOH) and using funding from the Tobacco Settlement Fund for research projects regarding spinal cord injuries and related infrastructure.

The Spinal Cord Injury Research Advisory Committee is established within DOH and will consist of nine members appointed by the Secretary:

- A representative of a PA medical college or university;
- Two neurosurgeons;
- Two physicians who specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation;
- A physician specializing in spinal cord injuries;
- An individual with a spinal cord injury;
- A family member of a person with a spinal cord injury;
- A veteran with a spinal cord injury.

Members will serve a term of two years and meetings shall occur at least twice a year. Members of the committee shall not be paid for their service, but members who are not state government employees shall receive reasonable expenses incurred in the course of their official duties.

SB 31 also amends Section 904 (Department Responsibilities) to provide that the Spinal Cord Injury Research Advisory Committee, together with DOH and the Health Research Advisory Committee, shall establish the research priorities for Pennsylvania.

The bill amends Section 906 (Use of Funds) to change the allocation of research funds. Fifteen percent of the funds appropriated under Section 906 shall be allocated in the following manner:

- Not less than \$1,000,000 shall be used for spinal cord injury research.
- The balance of the funds shall be used for other research projects by eligible participants.

Finally, SB 31 adds a new section (Spinal Cord Injury Research Program Funding) to provide that an institution that conducts research on spinal cord injuries shall be eligible to receive a grant from the \$1,000,000 allocated for spinal cord research. Grants shall be awarded to conduct research into new treatments and rehabilitative efforts for the functional improvement of people with spinal cord injuries, which may include pharmaceuticals, medical devices, brain stimulus and rehabilitative approaches and techniques.

FISCAL IMPACT: Enactment of this legislation would have no fiscal impact. SB 31 does not impact the total amount of available research grant funding, but it will change how the current Tobacco Settlement Fund research allocations are distributed.

In addition, the Department of Health would be required to reimburse members of the committee who are not state employees for travel and related expenses. Assuming two meetings are conducted annually and using the latest IRS mileage reimbursement rate, travel and related expenses are estimated to be less than \$1,000 if three advisory committee members seek reimbursement. This reimbursement can be accommodated by Department of Health's General Government Operations appropriation.

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House Appropriations Committee (R)

DATE: October 17, 2018

Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.