

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 721

PRINTER NO. 1147

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

June 2, 2023

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Schwank

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 721 establishes the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) State Advisory Board. The bill outlines the advisory duties of the WIC State Advisory Board (board) to include the following:

- Advise the Department of Health (department) in an effort to increase enrollment and utilization of the programs and to improve the quality of services to support connections between WIC and comprehensive services to address the needs of pregnant women, mothers, infants and children; and
- Advise the department regarding technological improvements or enhancements for program operations, efficacy and efficiency, including the following:
 - Incorporating the use of technology modernization tools to remove barriers for program participants, including the potential to load benefits remotely and purchase WIC benefits online;
 - Developing and maximizing the use of telehealth technology for the increased convenience of program participants; and
 - Coordinating and collating services to improve efficiency and effectiveness of those services;

The bill outlines other duties of the board to include the following:

- Review current aggregate data on WIC eligibility and enrollment at the state level;
- Become familiar with the WIC Policy Manual and WIC State plan;
- Advise on best practices that are used in other states;
- Consult with organizations and other agencies that work with WIC participants in fulfilling duties under the act;
- Increase awareness and support of WIC breastfeeding services for WIC participants; and
- Increase access to WIC-authorized stores for WIC participants.

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

The bill establishes the following members of the WIC State Advisory Board:

- Ex officio members of the board:
 - The Secretary of Health or a designee;
 - The Director of WIC or a designee; and
 - Two subject matter experts, as determined by the Secretary of Health or a designee.
- Members of the board include representatives from each of the following:
 - Two medical professionals (one of whom is a pediatric physician) with expertise in serving women and children from underserved populations;
 - Two advocates focused on addressing food insecurity;
 - Two child or maternal advocates;
 - Three WIC participants, each representing a different region of the Commonwealth;
 - One representative from two different WIC-authorized stores with a preference for one from an urban store and one from a rural area;
 - A representative from each of the three different WIC local agencies, each representing a different region of this Commonwealth; and
 - A breastfeeding expert.

The board shall be staffed in collaboration with individuals from the department.

The bill stipulates that the board shall meet no less than quarterly but shall meet every month for the first six months after the board is established. Meeting agendas and all meeting minutes shall be posted to the department's publicly accessible internet website. Meetings shall comply with the Right-to-Know Law.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Senate Bill 721 will have no fiscal impact to the Commonwealth. The bill codifies the Women, Infants and Children Advisory Group, which was established by the Department of Health in August 2022.