

FISCAL NOTE

August 8, 2017

Bill No:	SB 31	Printer's No:	12	Sponsor:	Scavello (R)
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COST / (SAVINGS)

Fund (s)	2017-18	2018-19
Tobacco Settlement Fund	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
General Fund – Department of Health (DOH) General Government Operations	See “FISCAL IMPACT”	See “FISCAL IMPACT”

SUMMARY: This bill would establish the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program, the Spinal Cord Injury Advisory Committee and provide for the allocation of no less than \$1,000,000 from the Tobacco Settlement Fund.

ANALYSIS: Senate Bill 31 would establish the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program. Under this bill, no less than \$1,000,000 would be appropriated to the program from the Tobacco Settlement Fund for research and the balance would continue to be used for other research projects by eligible participants. Currently, Act 77 of 2001, includes fifteen percent for “other research projects.” The \$1,000,000 appropriated for the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program established under this bill would be allocated from the fifteen percent allocated for “other research projects.” Funds would be used for research projects concerning spinal cord injuries and related infrastructures by eligible applicants. The funds may also be used to conduct peer reviews and performance reviews.

Additionally, the Spinal Cord Research Advisory Committee would be established in the DOH. The DOH secretary would be required to appoint nine members to the committee, as defined under this act. The committee would meet at least twice a year. Members would receive no compensation for their services. However, members who are not commonwealth employees would be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the course of their official duties.

Institutions that conduct research on spinal cord injuries in the commonwealth would be eligible to receive a grant under this program. Grants would be awarded to conduct research into new and innovative treatments and rehabilitative efforts for the functional improvement of people with spinal cord injuries, which would include, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, brain stimulus and rehabilitative approaches and techniques. DOH would be permitted to solicit funds to supplement grants awarded for spinal cord injury research under this act.

This act would be effective 60 days upon passage.

FISCAL IMPACT: The 2017-2018 Governor’s Executive Budget does not provide for the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program. The revenue package for Act 1A of 2017 is currently pending. As

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of August 8, 2017, the distribution from the Tobacco Settlement Fund has not been resolved. Additional costs would be incurred, as DOH would be required to reimburse nine non-commonwealth employees of the Spinal Cord Research Advisory Committee for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred during their official duties. These costs generally range from \$15,000 to \$25,000 annually.