

# Legislative Analysis

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## MEDICAL SCHOOLS: CADAVERS FOR SCIENTIFIC USES

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**House Bill 4341 (Substitute H-2)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Matt Lori**

**1st Committee: Education**

**2nd Committee: Health Policy**

**Complete to 3-26-14**

### **A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4341 AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE 3-25-14**

The bill would amend the Public Health Code (MCL 333.2652) to authorize the Michigan Department of Community Health to designate any of the state's accredited medical schools having a mortuary science licensee on staff to receive dead human bodies or parts of bodies that have been dedicated to science. Currently, the act only cites Michigan State University, Wayne State University, and the University of Michigan.

(Oakland University, Western Michigan University, and Central Michigan University now have medical schools underway.)

Under existing law, the parts or bodies (hereafter, cadavers) must be used in medical instruction or for the purpose of instruction, study, and use in the promotion of education in the health sciences. The MDCH may also allocate the cadavers to a hospital.

A medical school that receives a cadaver could only transfer it to another medical school designated by the DCH and to no other person. The bill defines "medical school" to mean an accredited medical school located in the state that has a mortuary science licensee on staff. "Mortuary science licensee" means an individual who holds a license for the practice of mortuary science under Article 18 of the Occupational Code.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

House Bill 4341 would have no fiscal implications for the Department of Community Health or local units of government.

### **BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE:**

Currently, a person who wishes to leave his or her body to science may only choose between Michigan State University, University of Michigan, or Wayne State University. Under certain circumstances, unclaimed bodies may also be transferred by a local unit of government to the Department of Community Health for designation to any of these universities or to hospitals for the purposes of scientific research and medical education. Recently, several other medical schools have opened or are about to open. Alumni of those universities would like the opportunity to benefit medical students at their old

schools and the new medical schools would benefit by receiving cadavers from the DCH. The bill would resolve these issues.

In addition, each medical school has a limit on the number of cadavers they can house at any one time. Apparently, it is common practice for one medical school with too many cadavers to transfer one or more to another medical school in short supply. In this way, all medical students are more likely to have the opportunity to participate in the all-important learning opportunity such gifts afford. The bill would address this scenario by restricting transfers of cadavers between medical schools to only those programs with a licensed mortician on staff.

In a separate issue, Gift of Life, which is the federally-designated organ procurement program for Michigan, has requested to be authorized by the bill to also designate assignment of a dead body or body parts. Gift of Life currently coordinates the body donation program at Western Michigan University and frequently is called by hospitals and hospices on behalf of patients' families requesting assistance with a family's request to donate their loved one's body to further scientific research. Gift of Life believes it is uniquely qualified to assist families whose loved one wanted to have a body donation find the best place—whether a university medical school or a hospital—based on current needs and research focus.

#### **POSITIONS:**

The Michigan Department of Community Health indicated support for the bill. (3-18-14)

A representative of Oakland University testified in support of the bill. (3-18-14)

A representative of Western Michigan University School of Medicine testified in support of the bill. (3-18-14)

A representative of Gift of Life testified in support of the bill. (3-18-14)

Michigan Association of Medical Examiners indicated support for the bill. (3-18-14)

Michigan State Medical Society indicated support for the bill. (3-18-14)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.