

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1980.

Approved May 20, 1980.

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CHAPTER 620

(House Bill 994)

AN ACT concerning

Drug DES - Accident or Health Insurance

FOR the purpose of prohibiting insurers from denying or canceling policies of nonprofit health insurance plans, accident or health insurance, or group or blanket accident or health insurance solely because insured persons have been exposed to Diethylstilbestrol, commonly referred to as DES.

BY adding to

Article 48A - Insurance Code  
Section 354U, 470P, and 477C  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(1979 Replacement Volume and 1979 Supplement)

Preamble

The effective identification, screening, diagnosis, care, and treatment of persons who have taken diethylstilbestrol, commonly referred to as DES, or who have been exposed to DES prenatally is of paramount public importance.

Between 1940 and 1970, DES, a synthetic estrogen-type hormone, was extensively administered to pregnant women threatened with miscarriage. Subsequently, a causal association was found between DES and certain types of cancer and abnormalities in the offspring of those who took the drug during pregnancy. As a result of these findings, the use of DES during pregnancy has been discontinued. The vast majority of exposed persons are unaware of their exposure and have not been adequately screened for any malignant condition.

This problem in cancer control is likely to grow significantly over the next few years as exposed female offspring reach reproductive age, the time when abnormalities become apparent. The situation is compounded by the relative newness of the studies associating DES with cancer; now, therefore,