



February 27, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Room 121 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information on House Bill 1382 - Children in Out-of-Home Placement - Placement in Medical Facilities

Dear Chairman McIntosh:

Kennedy Krieger Institute applauds the bill sponsors of House Bill 1382 for serving as tireless advocates for some of Maryland's most vulnerable children and adolescents.

Maryland's youth must have access to appropriate services, regardless of their level of need. When a child is removed from their family, the removal itself is traumatic, compounding the traumas that led to that removal, such as abuse, neglect, trafficking victimization, and behavioral health challenges.

A child or adolescent who is made to endure unnecessary or extended hospitalizations will have little to no access to ongoing education, outdoor recreational activities, or community and family engagement. This is not only detrimental to the child, it is a significant resource drain limiting the hospital's ability to admit and treat more patients. Placement agencies are overwhelmed in their attempt to find the appropriated placement and treatment option for the child in the community. This often leads to the child remaining in the hospital or being placed in an inappropriate placement which inevitably leads to a return to the hospital.

These traumas, also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), are associated with increased risk for a broad range of negative social outcomes, psychiatric and substance use disorders, health risk behaviors, and medical health problems.

Trauma, especially when untreated, can have devastating long term effects to an individual, including major health concerns (obesity, diabetes, depression, cancer), behavior (smoking, alcoholism, drug use) and decreased life potential (graduation rates, academic achievement).

Kennedy Krieger recognizes the abundant systemic challenges and appreciates the effort of the Committee to engage in meaningful conversation on solutions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bradley L. Schlaggar".

Bradley L. Schlaggar, MD, PhD
President and CEO