

DATE: February 27, 2020

BILL NUMBER: HB 1069 **COMMITTEE:** Judiciary

BILL TITLE: Juvenile Causes - Court Records

DHR POSITION: Support

The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully submits this letter of support regarding House Bill 1069 (HB 1069). HB1069 authorizes the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to review juvenile court records if DJS or DHS are providing treatment for that youth.

Current law allows DHS access to and confidential use of a court record if DHS is jointly providing services or care for a child with DJS. HB1069 is designed to remedy a statute that, until last summer, was read to allow both DHS and DJS to have access to child in need of assistance (CINA) and delinquency cases through the Baltimore City Juvenile Court Quest case management system. In August, the court restricted access so that DJS may only view delinquency cases, and Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) may only view CINA cases. The impact has hampered the two agencies in continuing their collaborative service to youth and families. The full exchange of DHS and DJS records is of particular importance now as courts implement the Crossover Youth Practice Model, soon to be adopted in Baltimore City, where a single court will hear both delinquency and CINA cases involving DJS and the local departments of social services with the goal of allowing staff from both agencies and the courts to work together to serve youth. Without reciprocal access to each other's records, the full intent of the model cannot be realized. Moreover, DHS and DJS are implementing the Child, Juvenile, and Adult Management System (CJAMS) to enhance the sharing of records on the same platform for youth and families in both the child welfare and delinquency settings.

Legislation which passed unanimously in each of the last two legislative sessions has expanded access to DJS and DHS records between the agencies providing care to a youth. House Bill 1069 continues to build upon previous legislative efforts to authorize the sharing of juvenile records between the DHS and DJS when both agencies are serving the same child by allowing DJS to access court records in CINA cases. This legislation addresses this discrepancy which will ensure co-committed youth receive appropriate care. Sharing information between agencies will enhance service planning for youth by ensuring youth are properly released to the appropriate guardian. This bill will help support our interagency efforts to jointly plan and deliver services that support Maryland youth and their families.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Human Services supports this bill and respectfully requests that the Committee return a favorable report on House Bill 1069.

