

HOUSE BILL 1480

O4, J2

5r1520
CF 5r1521

By: **Delegates Cardin, Bagnall, Cullison, McCaskill, Pasteur, Pena–Melnyk, and Ruth**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2025

Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Child Advocacy Centers – Continuity of Care Standards for Health Care**
3 **Professionals and Reports of Violations**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring that standards established by the Maryland Statewide
5 Organization for Child Advocacy Centers require an individual providing medical or
6 mental health services in a child advocacy center to be licensed or certified and
7 provide services within the scope of the license or certification and require each child
8 advocacy center to establish a certain continuity of care plan; requiring each child
9 advocacy center to report certain violations to a certain health occupations board or
10 the Department of Human Services; requiring the Department to publish certain
11 information related to child advocacy centers on the Department’s website on or
12 before a certain date each year; and generally relating to child advocacy centers.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
14 Article – Criminal Procedure
15 Section 11–928
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

20 **Article – Criminal Procedure**

21 11–928.

22 (a) The Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and Policy shall establish and
23 sustain child advocacy centers in the State and ensure that every child in the State has
24 access to a child advocacy center.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (b) The child advocacy centers:

2 (1) may be based in private nonprofit organizations, local departments of
3 social services, local law enforcement agencies, or a partnership among any of these
4 entities;

5 (2) shall be developed and located to facilitate their use by alleged victims
6 residing in the surrounding areas;

7 (3) shall assist in the response to or investigation of allegations of sexual
8 crimes against children under Title 3, Subtitle 3 of the Criminal Law Article and sexual
9 abuse of minors under Title 3, Subtitle 6 of the Criminal Law Article and Title 5, Subtitle
10 7 of the Family Law Article;

11 (4) may assist in the response to or investigation of allegations of child
12 abuse and neglect under Title 3, Subtitle 6 of the Criminal Law Article and Title 5, Subtitle
13 7 of the Family Law Article and allegations of a crime of violence in the presence of a minor
14 under § 3-601.1 of the Criminal Law Article;

15 (5) shall provide a level of care that meets or exceeds the national
16 accreditation standards for child advocacy centers established by the Maryland Statewide
17 Organization for Child Advocacy Centers under subsection (d) of this section; and

18 (6) shall be included in all joint investigation procedures developed in
19 accordance with § 5-706 of the Family Law Article.

20 (c) The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy may contract with
21 public or private nonprofit organizations to operate child advocacy centers.

22 (d) (1) The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy shall contract
23 with a nonprofit organization that is qualified under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
24 Code and represents urban, rural, and suburban child advocacy centers in the State to
25 establish a Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers.

26 (2) The purpose of the Maryland Statewide Organization for Child
27 Advocacy Centers is to provide training, technical assistance, data collection, and capacity
28 building to meet local, State, and national requirements for child advocacy centers.

29 (3) **[The] SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (4) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE**
30 Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers shall establish standards for
31 child advocacy centers in the State that meet national accreditation standards for child
32 advocacy centers and shall include:

33 (i) multidisciplinary teams that include representation from law
34 enforcement, prosecutors, child protective services, the medical and mental health fields,
35 and victim advocacy;

- 1 (ii) cultural competency and diversity;
- 2 (iii) forensic interviews that are neutral, fact-finding, and avoid
3 duplicative interviewing;
- 4 (iv) victim support and advocacy for children and caregivers,
5 including appropriate counseling, legal, and medical services or referrals;
- 6 (v) medical evaluations;
- 7 (vi) mental health services;
- 8 (vii) a formal case review process;
- 9 (viii) a case tracking, monitoring, and outcomes process;
- 10 (ix) organizational capacity;
- 11 (x) creating a child-focused setting that is comfortable, safe, and
12 private; and
- 13 (xi) any additional necessary standards.

14 **(4) THE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED UNDER PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS**
15 **SUBSECTION SHALL REQUIRE:**

16 **(I) AN INDIVIDUAL PROVIDING MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH**
17 **SERVICES AS PART OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM TO BE LICENSED OR CERTIFIED**
18 **BY THE APPROPRIATE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS BOARD AND PROVIDE SERVICES**
19 **WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE PROVIDER'S LICENSE OR CERTIFICATION; AND**

20 **(II) EACH CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER TO ESTABLISH A**
21 **CONTINUITY OF CARE PLAN THAT AT A MINIMUM SHALL:**

22 **1. PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTIFICATION TO THE CHILD AND**
23 **PARENT OR GUARDIAN WHEN THERE IS A CHANGE IN A PROVIDER OF MEDICAL OR**
24 **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES THAT INCLUDES:**

25 **A. THE NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE NEW**
26 **AND FORMER PROVIDER TO PROVIDE A MEANS THROUGH WHICH THE CHILD AND**
27 **PARENT OR GUARDIAN CAN CONTACT THE NEW AND FORMER PROVIDER; AND**

28 **B. A CONTINGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCESS IF**
29 **NOTIFICATION TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OR CONTACT WITH THE FORMER**
30 **PROVIDER WILL ENDANGER THE CHILD; AND**

1 **2. SUBJECT TO ITEM 1B OF THIS ITEM, ALLOW THE**
2 **FORMER PROVIDER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVIDER'S PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**
3 **AND STANDARDS OF CARE, TO CONTACT THE CHILD AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN TO**
4 **CONDUCT A TERMINATION SESSION AND ASSIST IN THE TRANSFER OF CARE.**

5 **(5) EACH CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER SHALL REPORT A COMPLAINT**
6 **BASED ON THE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED UNDER PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS**
7 **SUBSECTION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FOR INVESTIGATION AND**
8 **FURTHER ACTION.**

9 (e) Money for child advocacy centers:

10 (1) shall be distributed to child advocacy centers in accordance with a
11 formula agreed on by the Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers
12 and the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy;

13 (2) shall be used to supplement, not supplant, money that the program
14 receives from other sources; and

15 (3) may be used to assist child advocacy centers in meeting the standards
16 under subsection (d) of this section.

17 (f) **(1)** On or before June 1 each year, the Governor's Office of Crime
18 Prevention and Policy shall submit an annual report, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the
19 State Government Article, on child advocacy centers to the General Assembly.

20 **(2) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1 EACH YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT OF**
21 **HUMAN SERVICES SHALL PUBLISH ON ITS WEBSITE, FOR THE IMMEDIATELY**
22 **PRECEDING YEAR:**

23 **(I) A DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FOR CHILD ADVOCACY**
24 **CENTERS ESTABLISHED BY THE MARYLAND STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR CHILD**
25 **ADVOCACY CENTERS AND DETAILED INFORMATION ON COMPLIANCE OF EACH**
26 **CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER WITH THE STANDARDS;**

27 **(II) A DESCRIPTION OF ANY DATA COLLECTED BY THE**
28 **MARYLAND STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS,**
29 **INCLUDING HOW AND TO WHOM COLLECTED DATA IS REPORTED; AND**

30 **(III) COMPLAINT INFORMATION RELATED TO EACH CHILD**
31 **ADVOCACY CENTER, IF APPLICABLE, AND THE RESOLUTION OF ANY COMPLAINT**
32 **RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
2 October 1, 2025.