

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

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 6, 2025

CHAPTER _____

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 employed by or
6 contracted with a Child Advocacy Center providing medical or mental health services
7 in a child advocacy center to be licensed or certified, if applicable, and provide
8 services within the scope of the license or certification and require each child
9 advocacy center to establish a certain continuity of care plan; requiring each child
10 advocacy center to report certain violations to a certain health occupations board or
11 the ~~Department of Human Services~~ Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and
12 Policy; requiring the ~~Department~~ Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and Policy
13 to publish certain information related to child advocacy centers on the ~~Department’s~~
14 Office’s website on or before a certain date each year; and generally relating to child
15 advocacy centers.

16 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
17 Article – Criminal Procedure
18 Section 11–928
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



Article – Criminal Procedure

11-928.

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

(b) The child advocacy centers:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 (ii) cultural competency and diversity;

9 (iii) forensic interviews that are neutral, fact-finding, and avoid
10 duplicative interviewing;

11 (iv) victim support and advocacy for children and caregivers,
12 including appropriate counseling, legal, and medical services or referrals;

13 (v) medical evaluations;

14 (vi) mental health services;

15 (vii) a formal case review process;

16 (viii) a case tracking, monitoring, and outcomes process;

17 (ix) organizational capacity;

18 (x) creating a child-focused setting that is comfortable, safe, and
19 private; and

20 (xi) any additional necessary standards.

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

23 **(I) AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYED BY OR CONTRACTED WITH A**
24 **CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER PROVIDING MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AS**
25 **PART OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM TO BE LICENSED OR CERTIFIED BY THE**
26 **APPROPRIATE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS BOARD, IF APPLICABLE, AND PROVIDE**
27 **SERVICES WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE PROVIDER'S LICENSE OR CERTIFICATION; AND**

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

30 **1. IF KNOWN BY THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER AND THE**
31 **FORMER PROVIDER IS EMPLOYED BY OR CONTRACTED WITH THE CHILD ADVOCACY**

1 CENTER, PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTIFICATION TO THE CHILD AND PARENT OR
 2 GUARDIAN WHEN THERE IS A CHANGE IN A PROVIDER OF MEDICAL OR MENTAL
 3 HEALTH SERVICES THAT INCLUDES:

4 ~~A.~~ THE NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE NEW
 5 AND FORMER PROVIDER TO PROVIDE A MEANS THROUGH WHICH THE CHILD AND
 6 PARENT OR GUARDIAN CAN CONTACT THE NEW AND FORMER PROVIDER; AND

7 ~~B. A CONTINGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCESS IF~~
 8 ~~NOTIFICATION TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OR CONTACT WITH THE FORMER~~
 9 ~~PROVIDER WILL ENDANGER THE CHILD; AND~~

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

14 (5) EACH CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER SHALL REPORT A COMPLAINT
 15 BASED ON THE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED UNDER PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS
 16 SUBSECTION TO THE ~~DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES~~ GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
 17 CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICY FOR REFERRAL TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR
 18 INVESTIGATION AND FURTHER ACTION, IF NECESSARY.

19 (e) Money for child advocacy centers:

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

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

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

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

30 (2) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1 EACH YEAR, ~~THE DEPARTMENT OF~~
 31 ~~HUMAN SERVICES~~ BEGINNING IN 2027, THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF CRIME
 32 PREVENTION AND POLICY SHALL PUBLISH ON ITS WEBSITE, FOR THE IMMEDIATELY
 33 PRECEDING YEAR:

1 (I) A DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FOR CHILD ADVOCACY
2 CENTERS ESTABLISHED BY THE MARYLAND STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR CHILD
3 ADVOCACY CENTERS AND ~~DETAILED~~ INFORMATION ON COMPLIANCE OF EACH
4 CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER WITH THE STANDARDS; AND

5 ~~(II) A DESCRIPTION OF ANY DATA COLLECTED BY THE~~
6 ~~MARYLAND STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS,~~
7 ~~INCLUDING HOW AND TO WHOM COLLECTED DATA IS REPORTED; AND~~

8 ~~(III)~~ (II) COMPLAINT INFORMATION RELATED TO EACH CHILD
9 ADVOCACY CENTER, IF APPLICABLE, AND THE RESOLUTION OF ANY COMPLAINT
10 RECEIVED BY THE ~~DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES~~ GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF
11 CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICY, UNLESS SUCH INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL
12 OR OTHERWISE PROTECTED UNDER FEDERAL LAW.

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

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.