

HOUSE BILL 1292

O4, J2
HB 1480/25 – APP

6lr3623

By: **Delegates Bagnall and Cullison**

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2026

Assigned to: Appropriations

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 2, 2026

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 Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and Policy; authorizing the Governor’s
12 Office of Crime Prevention and Policy to issue grants to assist child advocacy centers
13 with technical assistance to implement standards; requiring the Governor’s Office of
14 Crime Prevention and Policy to publish certain information related to child advocacy
15 centers on the Office’s website on or before a certain date each year; and generally
16 relating to child advocacy centers.

17 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

18 Article – Criminal Procedure

19 Section 11–928

20 Annotated Code of Maryland

21 (2025 Replacement Volume)

22 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

23 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 **DEFINED BY NATIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AS PART OF A**
26 **MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM TO BE LICENSED OR CERTIFIED BY THE APPROPRIATE**
27 **HEALTH OCCUPATIONS BOARD, IF APPLICABLE, AND PROVIDE SERVICES WITHIN**
28 **THE SCOPE OF THE PROVIDER'S LICENSE OR CERTIFICATION OR PRACTICE UNDER**
29 **LAWFUL SUPERVISION AS AUTHORIZED BY STATE LAW; AND**

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

1 1. IF KNOWN BY THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER AND THE
 2 FORMER PROVIDER IS EMPLOYED BY OR CONTRACTED WITH THE CHILD ADVOCACY
 3 CENTER, IN COMPLIANCE WITH HIPAA (HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND
 4 ACCOUNTABILITY ACT) AND APPLICABLE FEDERAL AND STATE CONFIDENTIALITY
 5 LAWS, AND ONLY IF IT DOES NOT PRESENT A DANGER TO THE CHILD, PROVIDE
 6 WRITTEN NOTIFICATION TO THE CHILD AND ~~PARENT OR~~ LEGAL GUARDIAN WHEN
 7 THERE IS A CHANGE IN A PROVIDER OF ~~MEDICAL OR~~ MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
 8 THAT INCLUDES THE NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE NEW PROVIDER OR
 9 PRACTICE AND FORMER PROVIDER OR PRACTICE TO PROVIDE A MEANS THROUGH
 10 WHICH THE CHILD AND ~~PARENT OR~~ LEGAL GUARDIAN CAN CONTACT THE NEW AND
 11 FORMER PROVIDER; AND

12 2. SUBJECT TO ITEM 1 OF THIS ITEM, ALLOW THE
 13 FORMER PROVIDER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVIDER'S PROFESSIONAL ETHICS
 14 AND STANDARDS OF CARE, TO CONTACT THE CHILD AND ~~PARENT OR~~ LEGAL
 15 GUARDIAN TO CONDUCT A TERMINATION SESSION AND WHEN INDICATED AS
 16 CLINICALLY APPROPRIATE AND PRESENTING NO ADDITIONAL RISK TO THE CHILD
 17 AS DETERMINED BY THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER SUPERVISOR TO ASSIST IN THE
 18 TRANSFER OF CARE.

19 (5) EACH CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER SHALL REPORT A COMPLAINT
 20 RESULTING IN A FINDING BY CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES BASED ON THE
 21 STANDARDS ESTABLISHED UNDER PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION TO THE
 22 GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICY FOR REFERRAL TO THE
 23 ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR INVESTIGATION AND FURTHER ACTION, IF NECESSARY.

24 (e) (1) Money for child advocacy centers:

25 ~~(1)~~ (1) shall be distributed to child advocacy centers in accordance with
 26 a formula agreed on by the Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers
 27 and the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy;

28 ~~(2)~~ (II) shall be used to supplement, not supplant, money that the
 29 program receives from other sources; and

30 ~~(3)~~ (III) may be used to assist child advocacy centers in meeting the
 31 standards under subsection (d) of this section.

32 (2) THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICY
 33 MAY ISSUE A GRANT TO ASSIST A CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER WITH TECHNICAL
 34 ASSISTANCE TO IMPLEMENT STANDARDS.

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

(2) ON OR BEFORE ~~JANUARY~~ JUNE 1 EACH YEAR, BEGINNING IN 2028, THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICY SHALL PUBLISH ON ITS WEBSITE, FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING YEAR:

~~(i) A DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FOR CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS ESTABLISHED BY THE MARYLAND STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION FOR CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS AND INFORMATION ON COMPLIANCE OF EACH CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER WITH THE STANDARDS; AND~~

~~(ii) COMPLAINT INFORMATION~~ A SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS RELATED TO EACH COMPLIANCE OF CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER STANDARDS, IF APPLICABLE, AND THE RESOLUTION OF ANY COMPLAINT RECEIVED BY THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICY, UNLESS SUCH INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL OR OTHERWISE PROTECTED UNDER FEDERAL LAW.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect ~~October~~ July 1, 2026.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.