



February 23, 2021

Hon. Chairman Paul G. Pinsky & Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SB548 Public Schools - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Surveys – Revisions
****SUPPORT****

When we talk about statistics, especially as it relates to public health it is important to keep this definition in mind, “Prevalence is a term that means being widespread and it is distinct from incidence. Prevalence is a measurement of all individuals affected by the disease at a particular time, whereas incidence is a measurement of the number of new individuals who contract a disease during a particular period of time.”

We can look at reporting numbers, tracked by our partners at the CACs, reported to law enforcement and/or child protective services to get an idea of incidents of child sexual abuse. We can delineate those cases through the system and follow their outcomes. This is an important piece of the picture. However, it is not the only piece.

Determining prevalence in behavior is a more nuanced but still equally important. In many states across the country, one of the tools employed by the CDC is the [YRBS \(Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System\)](#) which anonymously surveys middle and high school students in public schools on a variety of public health related issues (tobacco use, alcohol use, access to food, domestic violence).

SB548 would require that all of the original ACEs be included in the YRBS and it would preclude the authority of the MDSE from omitting questions. It would also require that the data be submitted to the Maryland Department of Health delineated by county level so that local level jurisdictions can respond quicker to trends in their community. Having prevalence data in CSA, delineated by county, would be extremely helpful as prevention organizations, like ours, moves forward with awareness building and prevention training initiatives.

We are requesting a favorable report from this committee to move this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Milio
Executive Director