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Lt. GovernorLarry Hogan
GovernorSam Abed
Secretary

DATE: February 12, 2021
Bill Number: HB 854 - Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center - Inclusion of Out-of-Home Placement Data
DJS Position: Support

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS or department) supports HB 854.

HB 854 requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide data to the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center regarding a child's experience in out-of-home placements in addition to data currently collected.

HB 854 advances research and better outcomes for youth involved in both the delinquency and dependency systems.

Research has shown a significant overlap between youth involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Additionally, out-of-home placements may create a pathway for youths to enter deeper into the juvenile justice system or become further justice-involved. HB 854 will create the ability to de-identify and connect data between the two systems and allow greater capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs serving Maryland youth, regardless of which agency is providing services.

HB 854 supports the DJS goal to use data to determine best practices and foster interagency collaboration.

DJS is a data-driven agency, and the data collected assists both the department in our policy-making processes and the work of other agencies and stakeholders. Every year DJS releases an annual report, the Data Resource guide (DRG), in order to provide a detailed look at our system and trends data trends. The DRG also provides the opportunity to offer more transparency to our partners, both on the local and state level. HB 854 coincides with existing interagency data collection initiatives with DHS, increases the ability to send and receive data beyond what is currently available, and will help guide the success of children in foster care and beyond.

HB 854 supports existing DJS/DHS partnerships, including the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM).

In 2015, DJS and partners began the CYPM, a program designed to coordinate casework of youth who are dually involved in both the juvenile justice and the child welfare systems. Throughout its implementation, the program has fostered increased communication and collaboration between DJS and local Department of Social Services (DSS) offices to provide youth with services that fit their individual needs, to avoid duplication of services, and to divert foster care youth when appropriate away from formal justice system involvement.

HB854 is consistent with MLDS data-sharing legislation DJS has supported in the past.

In 2019, DJS supported and the MD General Assembly passed HB 704/Ch. 688, which added juvenile delinquency and discipline records as part of student data collected by the MLDS Center. The department now provides information to MLDS and participates as a member of the MLDS Governing Board. As a result, DJS staff analyzes and validates data transferred from DJS to MLDS and interprets data requests received by MLDS. This cooperation on inter-agency issues, projects and matters concerning data management helps to meet the business and technical needs of the MLDS database and the agencies that share data.

For these reasons, DJS respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 854.