

Date: February 8, 2022

Bill number: SB0282

Committee: Finance

Bill title: **Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences**

DHS Position: **Letter of Information/Favorable with Amendments**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS), thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide information about Senate Bill 282 (SB 282).

Senate Bill 282 would establish a workgroup whose explicit purpose would be to “develop recommendations for unifying and coordinating child and family–serving agencies to better link youth and families to needed interventions and services.” The workgroup would examine the health care community’s ability to assess for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the impacts of trauma, in order to better intervene. The efforts of the workgroup established by this bill have the potential to improve the State’s assessment of community ACE incidence and prevalence, and their behavioral impacts, which will allow for improved intervention design and outcome assessments. The bill also could provide improved communication and collaboration among governmental and non-governmental human services agencies, which may result in improved coordination of, reduced duplication of, and fewer gaps in services.

The bill engages a broad group of experts to accomplish the workgroup's efforts. However, this legislation as drafted does not incorporate the involvement or expertise of DHS as Maryland’s leading child welfare agency or any local social service department. Discussions surrounding ACEs improvement of child and family service provision and coordination should involve DHS. Given our widespread role in the provision of services to this population it is the opinion of DHS that we should be involved in these discussions.

Additionally, DHS oversees the Maryland Total Human-services Integrated Network (MD THINK). Established under Executive Order 01.01.2021.11, the MD THINK Committee shall “make recommendations for State policies and the delivery of services to those who have had adverse childhood experiences so as to reduce their effects.” Given the involvement of DHS in this directive and the goals of SB 282, DHS believes it is appropriate for the Department to be involved in the workgroup’s efforts.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide the aforementioned information to the committee for consideration during your deliberations.

