



Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 820

Title: Child Abuse and Neglect - Investigations - Timeliness

Hearing Date: March 10, 2022

Position: Support

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) supports *Senate Bill 820 – Child Abuse and Neglect - Investigations - Timeliness*.

LCPCM agrees it is important to ensure that child abuse and neglect cases are investigated timely. As behavioral health providers we have seen firsthand the long-term harm that can result from abuse or neglect. In order to ensure timely investigations, we believe it is important that all properly trained providers are able to assist. Currently, only physicians, psychologists, and social workers are able to complete mental health assessments during a child abuse investigation. There are currently shortages across the behavioral health field so we believe the list of providers should be updated to include licensed clinical professional counselors (LCPCs). LCPCs have mental health assessment and diagnosis as part of their training and scope of practice. Adding them to the list of providers in the child abuse statute would help ensure children experiencing abuse and neglect have access to timely mental health assessments.

The amendment we are requesting is:

On Page 2, Line 28 strike “or” and in Line 30 strike “and” substitute “**OR**”

On Page 2 after Line 30, insert:

“(IV) A CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR, LICENSED UNDER TITLE 17 OF THE HEALTH OCCUPATIONS ARTICLE; AND”

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.