



**Committee:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 820

**Title:** Child Abuse and Neglect - Investigations - Timeliness

**Hearing Date:** March 31, 2022

**Position:** Support

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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.

We appreciate Sen. Lam’s willingness to add an amendment to SB 820 to add LCPCs to the list of providers who can provide mental health screenings as part of a child abuse investigation. This amendment will help ensure timely assessment of children in our child welfare system.

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