

Date: February 14, 2023

Bill number: SB0255

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Title: **Public Health – Home- and Community-Based Services for Children and Youth**

DHS Position: **LETTER OF INFORMATION**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written information regarding Senate Bill 255.

Senate Bill 255 would expand and enhance access to critical behavioral health services for children and youth with complex behavioral health needs. Many of the children and youth under the care of DHS have complex behavioral health needs. Senate Bill 255 would, among other things, expand High-fidelity wraparound services which provide individualized, team-based, collaborative approaches to serving youth and families. Research indicates that wraparound enrollment decreases the use of residential treatment services¹. While the overall number of youth in foster care has declined, there has been a proportionate increase in the number of youth in foster care with more complex needs that require more customized, higher levels of care. At the same time, the number of available resources to serve youth with complex behavioral needs has declined.

This approach aligns with DHS' implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). FFPSA aims to minimize trauma experienced by children through preventive services supporting DHS's efforts to increase the number of children who can safely remain in their homes. Increased access to intensive care coordination, child and family team meetings, individualized plans of care, formal and informal support and reimbursement for these services will allow for a more comprehensive approach to serving the children, youth, and families in need of behavioral health treatment.

The Department of Human Services has a strong partnership with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). Together DHS and MDH work to address the placement needs of children in foster care with complex, high intensity needs, implement the Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) Family Mentors program, implement the Family First Prevention Services Act, and to coordinate other services in the community. This bill supports the ongoing partnership between DHS and MDH for the delivery of prevention services.

DHS appreciates the opportunity to offer the aforementioned information for the Committee's consideration during your deliberations. DHS welcomes collaboration with the Committee on Senate Bill 255.

¹ Cosgrove, J. A., Lee, B. R., & Unick, G. J. (2020). A Longitudinal Evaluation of Wraparound's Impact on Youth Mental Health Service Use. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 28(3), 156–166. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1063426619842568>

