



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 8, 2023

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: SB 631 - Child Abuse and Neglect - Reports and Records – Disclosure – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill (SB) 631 - Child Abuse and Neglect - Reports and Records - Disclosure. SB 631 provides that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, a report or record of child abuse or neglect is not confidential if the report pertains to a child who: (1) suffered a fatality or near fatality; (2) was in the custody of a state department or in the care of a foster parent at the time the child suffered a fatality or near fatality; and (3) is the subject of an investigation, a report, a referral, or a complaint received by a local department.

MDH notes that there are existing multidisciplinary groups in Maryland charged with preventing child injury and death:

- The Maryland State Child Fatality Review (CFR) Team is a multidisciplinary and multi agency review team that partners with local review teams to conduct confidential reviews of child death cases to identify system opportunities for improvement.¹ The CFR team provides recommendations to prevent future child deaths.
- The State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect and the Citizen Review Board for Children examine policies and practices for protecting children. Most recently, a state Child Maltreatment Fatality Review Plan was developed to review specific cases of child maltreatment deaths.²

Confidentiality for the case review process is an important component to allow an unbiased, protected review of the cases and protect the privacy of the families and children involved. Removing confidentiality may prevent agencies or organizations from disclosing vital information.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Megan Peters, Acting Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

¹<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=ghg§ion=5-702&enactments=false>

²<https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/Child%20Protective%20Services/Maryland%E2%80%99s-Child-Maltreatment-Fatality-Review-Plan.pdf>