



The
Family
Tree

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Raising families up.

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March 08, 2023
Hon. Chairman William C. Smith, Jr.
Hon. Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: OPPOSE HB 762 (SB0503) Criminal Procedure - Child Advocacy Centers - Care Providers

Dear Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Family Tree opposes HB 762 and I understand the important intent to protect vulnerable children and to ensure continuity of care in cases when clinical care and oversight is disrupted. However, the Bill proposes a remedy that is unrealistic and establishes a confusing precedent for providers to have legislation rather than regulator policy to shape practice standards. Because it is not regulatory, the enforcement is unclear at best.

The Family Tree, a proud affiliate of LifeBridge Health Group, is Maryland's leading non-profit organization dedicated to improving our community by preventing child abuse and neglect. In the forty-five years since The Family Tree first laid roots, the organization's leadership has cultivated a deep understanding of child abuse in Maryland and services that prevent abuse. With national affiliations such as Prevent Child Abuse America, and The National Exchange Clubs, Circle of Parents and the Enough Abuse Campaign, The Family Tree belongs to a growing network of NGOs across the country devoted to protecting the most vulnerable members of society, its children.

The Family Tree provides parent education, home visiting and case management services to hundreds of families every year. Although not traditional mental health services, our staff provide a range of critical support to vulnerable families with children. Despite our best effort it would be challenging for us to apply this standard of notification to our work. Since the pandemic, the recruitment of qualified staff is even more challenging. **We ask you to submit an unfavorable report.**

Thank you,

Patricia K. Cronin, LCSW-C
Executive Director