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**LETTER OF INFORMATION  
HOUSE BILL 1480**

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Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP)

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP) advises the Governor on criminal justice strategies, coordinates across public safety agencies, and allocates resources statewide to support public safety. One of GOCPP's duties is monitoring and reporting to the federal government on racial and ethnic disparities in Maryland's juvenile justice system.

[Section 11-928 of the Criminal Procedure Article](#) requires GOCPP to establish and sustain Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) in the State. GOCPP accomplishes this through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA) and grants provided to MCA and the 24 local CACs throughout the State. Current law also requires MCA to develop standards that conform to national accreditation standards (listed below). MCA will launch the required standards on July 1, 2025.

The primary purpose of this program is to coordinate the investigation of child abuse and neglect and to provide services to children and their non-offending family members without causing further trauma. Funds assist subrecipients in providing victim assistance, advocacy, support, and other coordinated justice system responses. Funds also assist CACs in becoming accredited by the National Children's Alliance (NCA).

Maryland currently has 24 CACs operating in all 24 jurisdictions. In Maryland, government entities oversee and administer most CACs (79%) and employ staff through these entities, including the local Department of Social Services, state's attorneys' offices, and local law enforcement entities. The remaining 21% are nonprofit agencies. The CACs operated by local governments are subject to their local government's oversight. Any CAC employee or contractor providing mental or medical healthcare is subject to professional licensing requirements and standards.

As of March 2024, 17 CACs in Maryland are accredited through the NCA, six are associate members, and one is an affiliate member. All 24 CACs are members of the Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA). The distinctions between the NCA memberships are as follows:

- Accredited Members: CACs that meet each of the 10 National Standards of Accreditation. Re-accreditation for every applicable CAC occurs every 5 years.

- Associate Members: CACs working toward, but have not yet achieved, implementation of all Standards for Accreditation may be granted this type of membership.
- Affiliate Members: CACs or Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) that are working to improve services for abused children through a collaborative approach to intervention in communities where all resources may not be available to achieve Accreditation.

All CACs (accredited and those working towards accreditation) work with comprehensive multidisciplinary teams as a requirement for accreditation. For a CAC to become accredited through the NCA, it must meet the criteria for the standards of accreditation, which fall under the following broader categories:

- Multidisciplinary Teams, comprised of members from many disciplines, such as mental health providers, medical staff, victim advocates, law enforcement, social services, and prosecution, work together in the investigation, treatment, and prosecution of child abuse cases.
- Cultural Competency and Diversity
- Forensic Interviews
- Victim Support and Advocacy
- Medical Evaluation
- Mental Health
- Case Review
- Case Tracking
- Organizational Capacity
- Child-Focused Setting

HB1480 would establish additional duties and responsibilities for the Maryland Children's Alliance and all 24 local Child Advocacy Centers. Currently, [Criminal Procedure 11-928](#) requires MCA to establish standards to meet or exceed national standards for accreditation. However, HB1480 might require MCA to monitor and track detailed information on the compliance of each standard for every Child Advocacy Center and submit that information to the Department of Human Services for publication every year. These additional responsibilities will increase MCA's operating costs and further stretch the State funding available to support CACs.