



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Will C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB1480 - CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS - CONTINUITY OF CARE
STANDARDS FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND REPORTS OF VIOLATIONS -
POSITION: INFORMATIONAL ONLY**

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully offers a letter of information for House Bill 1480 (HB 1480).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Social Services Administration implements the Child Protective Services (CPS) program and works in partnership with Child Advocacy Centers (CAC), which are affected by House Bill 1480 (HB 1480).

Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) in Maryland coordinate the investigation, treatment, and review of child abuse cases by utilizing multidisciplinary teams of professionals involved in child protective and victim advocacy services. There are twenty four CACs across the state with one in each jurisdiction. Some CACs work in partnership with neighboring jurisdictions to provide more specific services. CACs require the collaboration of the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS), local law enforcement, health professionals, and the local State's Attorney's Office. Each CAC's administration model varies. In general, they are administered by LDSS, county government, or non-profit organizations. Due to the variances in CAC administration, we do not have direct oversight authority for any CAC not administered by LDSS. A CAC's effectiveness

is contingent on collaboration with other agencies in jurisdictions where LDSS is not the administrative authority.

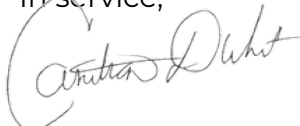
Maryland's network of Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) demonstrates a commitment to high standards. Seventeen of the twenty-four CACs in Maryland hold a high commitment of standards, being accredited through the National Children's Alliance (NCA), is the highest level of recognition a CAC can meet. The seven non-accredited CACs are working closely with the NCA to actively earn accreditation. The requirements for accreditation are more extensive than what HB 1480 would require. All twenty four CACs are displayed in tables on the following pages with the entity responsible for their administration and whether they are accredited.

Since DHS does not have oversight authority of all CACs, in April 2024 we requested CACs provide a list of all formal complaints received over the past five years. This information was provided to the House Health and Government Operations Committee the same month. The information provided consisted of two formal complaints: one occurring in Montgomery County in 2020 and one occurring in Carroll County in 2024.

The House Appropriations Committee [amended](#) HB 1480 before passing it out of committee. In the amendments, the Committee struck lines 28-30 on page 3 of the [first reader version of the bill](#). The now-stricken provision allowed CACs to establish a contingency process for notification of a change in the provider if the CAC believed the notification to a parent or guardian would endanger the child. As amended, HB 1480 mandates written notifications to both the child and their parent, even in cases where the child is receiving services through the CAC due to abuse at the hands of said parent.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide a letter of information to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Carnitra White", is written over a circular embossed seal.

Carnitra White
Principal Deputy Secretary

Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) Administration:

Jurisdiction	Name	Accredited
Anne Arundel	Anne Arundel County Child Advocacy Center	Yes
Caroline	Caroline County Children's Advocacy Center	In Process
Dorchester	Dorchester County Child Advocacy Center	In Process (recently received "Developing Center" status from National Children's Alliance)
Garrett	A New Day Child Advocacy Center	Yes
Harford	Harford County Child Advocacy Center	Yes
Prince George's	Prince George's County Child Advocacy Center	Yes
St. Mary's	St Mary's County Child Advocacy Center	In Process
Somerset	Somerset Child Advocacy Center	In Process
Talbot	Talbot County Children's Advocacy Center	Yes

County Administration:

Jurisdiction	Name	Accredited
Allegany	Jane's Place	Yes
Baltimore County	Baltimore County Child Advocacy Center	Yes
Carroll	Carroll County Advocacy and Investigation Center	Yes
Cecil	Cecil County Child Advocacy Center	Yes
Frederick	Child Advocacy Center of Frederick County	Yes

Local Law Enforcement Administration:

Jurisdiction	Name	Accredited
Howard	The Listening Place	Yes

Non-Profit Administration:

Jurisdiction	Name	Accredited	Non-Profit Organization
Baltimore City	Center for Hope	Yes	LifeBridge Health

Calvert	Calvert Family Advocates	In Process	Advisory Board for the Calvert County Department of Social Services
Charles	Center for Children	Yes	Center for Children
Kent	Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County	Yes	Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County
Montgomery	The Tree House Child Advocacy Center	In Process	The Tree House Child Advocacy Center
Washington	The Safe Place	Yes	The Safe Place
Wicomico	Wicomico Child Advocacy Center	In Process	Wicomico Child Advocacy Center
Worcester	The Cricket Center	Yes	The Cricket Center

Joint Administration:

Jurisdiction	Name	Accredited	Structural Organization
Queen Anne's	Queen Anne's County Child Abuse Response & Evaluation (CARE) Center	Yes	Queen Anne's County CARE Center is run through an interagency agreement. Five agencies comprise the CARE Center partnership; Centreville Police Department, Maryland State Police – Barrack "S" Centreville, QAC's Office of the Sheriff, Department of Social Services, and Office of the State's Attorney