

THE COALITION TO PROTECT MARYLAND'S CHILDREN

Our Mission: To combine and amplify the power of organizations and citizens working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. We strive to secure budgetary and public policy resources to make meaningful and measurable improvements in safety, permanence, and wellbeing.



HB1292 – Child Advocacy Centers – Continuity of Care Standards for Healthcare Professionals and Reports of Violations

House Appropriations Committee

March 11, 2026

Position: SUPPORT with amendments

The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children is a consortium of organizations and individuals formed in 1992 who are concerned about the care of Maryland's most vulnerable children and work together to educate and promote meaningful child welfare reform. **CPMC urges a favorable with amendments report on HB1292 - Child Advocacy Centers – Continuity of Care Standards for Healthcare Professionals and Reports of Violations.**

Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) are designed to provide a coordinated, child-focused response to allegations of abuse. Each center operates using a multi-disciplinary team that includes professionals from law enforcement, child protective services, medical and mental health services, and prosecutors. We are aware of versions of the bill having been introduced in the last few years and believe that the intent of this legislation is to ensure that CACs operate under quality standards across all jurisdictions.

However, some of the provisions in HB1292 do not enhance child safety. First, requiring that a provider must inform a parent or legal guardian of the change in provider may result in protective information about the abused child into the hands of a parent or legal guardian who may be the maltreater. There should be bill language to clarify that the parent or legal guardian is authorized to receive this information if that individual is not the offender. Second, continuing medical services are not coordinated through the CACs, and this reference should be removed from the bill. And lastly, we recommend that any complaints against a CAC regarding violations of these standards should only be made public upon conclusion of any investigation of the allegations to help safeguard the reputation of a CAC, which is designed to ensure child safety and protection.

It is for these reasons that the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children **urges a favorable report HB1292 - Child Advocacy Centers – Continuity of Care Standards for Healthcare Professionals and Reports of Violations.**¹

¹ Members of CPMC represented by this written testimony include – American Academy of Pediatrics - MD Chapter, Child Justice, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA - Baltimore County), Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY), Maryland Alliance for Children, National Association of Social Workers – MD (NASW), the State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect (SCCAN), and individual members of the coalition.

