



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Gloria Brown Burnett, Interim Secretary

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen St
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB1292 - CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS - CONTINUITY OF CARE
STANDARDS FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND REPORTS OF VIOLATIONS -
POSITION: INFORMATION ONLY**

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully offers information on House 1292 (HB 1292).

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 which is affected by HB1292. HB 1292 would require the Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA) to establish standards for notifying parents or guardians of children receiving services through Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) when there is a provider change. CACs in Maryland coordinate investigations, treatment, and review of child abuse cases by using multidisciplinary teams of professionals involved in child protective and victim advocacy services. Maryland law requires all 24 jurisdictions to partner with a CAC to provide specific services for children in their jurisdiction. CACs work with Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS), local law enforcement agencies, health professionals, and the local State's Attorney Office.

In general, CACs are administered by LDSS, county government, or non-profit organizations. There is no statewide authority with direct oversight for all CACs, and DHS lacks authority over CACs not administered by LDSS. A CAC's effectiveness is contingent on collaboration with other agencies in their jurisdiction, irrespective of which entity has administrative authority over the CAC. Moreover, the Governor's Office

of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCP) does not have administrative authority over any of the CACs, aside from serving as a passthrough for federal funds.

GOCP established the Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA) to set statewide standards for CACs in all 24 Maryland jurisdictions. MCA set [statewide standards](#) for all 24 CACs that align with the standards of the National Children's Alliance (NCA). The NCA [National Standards of Accreditation for Children's Advocacy Centers](#) (2023, updated 2025) provides standards for all accredited CACs and those seeking accreditation. NCA Standards share similarities with the requirements of HB 1292. NCA Standards require medical and mental health professionals to be licensed or certified in their respective fields and to practice according to their state's professional regulations, incorporate "Continuity of Care" within its mental health and medical standards, and stress accountability through a reaccreditation process every five years. On [page 20 of MCA's Statewide Standards of Care for CACs](#) it states "The CAC maintains a continuity of care policy to ensure uninterrupted services in the event a clinician is terminated or otherwise unavailable to provide a closure or transition session. When mental health services are provided through a partnering organization with a linkage agreement, that organization is also required to maintain a continuity of care policy to support seamless client transitions."

Due to the unique structure of CACs, the accreditation model utilized by all CACs is the most efficient way to ensure there are standards for services provided by CACs. Nineteen of Maryland's 24 CACs are accredited by the NCA, and the 5 CACs not accredited are working to earn accreditation. The requirements for NCA accreditation exceed the standards envisioned in HB 1292. All 24 CACs are identified in tables beginning on page three of our testimony, along with the entity responsible for their administration, and whether they are accredited.

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 Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at justin.hayes1@maryland.gov.

In service,



Gloria Brown Burnett
Interim 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
Kent	Children's Advocacy Center of Kent County	Yes
Prince George's	Prince George's County Child Advocacy Center	Yes
Somerset	Somerset Child Advocacy Center	In Process
St. Mary's	St Mary's County Child Advocacy Center	In Process
Talbot	Talbot County Children's Advocacy Center	Yes
Washington	The Safe Place	Yes
Wicomico	Wicomico Child Advocacy Center	In Process

County Administration:

Jurisdiction	Name	Accredited
Allegany	Jane's Place	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
Harford	Harford County Child Advocacy Center	Yes
Howard	The Listening Place	Yes

Non-Profit Administration:

Jurisdiction	Name	Accredited	Non-Profit Organization
Baltimore City	Center for Hope	Yes	LifeBridge Health
Charles	Center for Children	Yes	Center for Children
Montgomery	The Tree House Child Advocacy Center	Yes	The Tree House 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