

Citizens' Review Board for Children

## **CITIZENS' REVIEW BOARD FOR CHILDREN**

### **2006 ANNUAL REPORT**





# Citizens' Review Board for Children

August 2007

The Honorable Michael E. Busch  
Speaker of House of Delegates  
State House, H-101  
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.  
President of Senate  
State House, H-107  
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

Dear Speaker Busch and President Miller:

Enclosed is the Citizens' Review Board for Children (CRBC) 2006 Annual Report. This report combines findings and recommendations from our child protection and out-of-home care work into one report. It incorporates documentation from major child welfare advocates and data sources. The report is divided into three major sections.

## State of the Child Welfare System

Pages three to six summarize progress on significant child welfare initiatives from July 2005 through December 2006 including:

- Maryland's progress in implementing the federally required Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in response to the 2005 Child and Family Services Review;
- Maryland Children's Electronic Social Services Information Exchange (MD CHESSIE) and its impact on the child welfare system;
- The Child Welfare Accountability Act; and
- CRBC and DHR's partnership in the revised Quality Assurance Program.

## Major Recommendations for Systemic Improvement

Pages seven to ten update the status of the Children's Legislative Advocacy Committee's (CLAC) 2005 priority issues. CLAC's priorities provide the framework to ensure progress towards achieving desired outcomes for Maryland's children and families including but not limited to enhanced accountability measures, full implementation of the Child Welfare Workforce Act of 1998, and more focus and funds on the front-end of the child welfare spectrum.

## Child Welfare Data

Pages eleven to twenty-five present data on Maryland's child welfare system. The information is primarily based on CRBC's internal information system, which is driven by case reviews. Traditionally, CRBC's annual reports have included a standard array of data derived from CIS and FACTS. Unfortunately, the ability to review and present data was severely compromised by CHESSIE. Problems associated with CHESSIE have



compromised the child welfare system's ability to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children under its care. Without accurate, retrievable data maintained in a system in which the profession and the public can have confidence, Maryland cannot document compliance and achievement of federal and state requirements. More importantly, the continuity of case related services for the child and family is diminished.

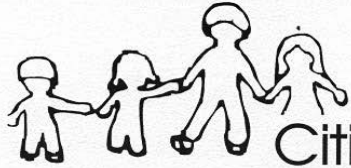
In 2006, Maryland's child welfare system was hampered by severe infrastructure deficits as well as by substantive problems that required redirection of programmatic resources. In order to address the needs of the vulnerable children whose lives are touched by the system, the new Administration will need to aggressively address both types of issues.

Sincerely,

*Nettie Anderson-Burrs*

Nettie Anderson-Burrs  
State Board Chairperson





# Citizens' Review Board for Children

## **FISCAL YEAR 2006 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **PREFACE**

#### Time Period

Although this report is being written in mid-2007, the data reported covers State Fiscal Year 2006 (July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006) and the policy developments are up-to-date through December 31, 2006.

#### Data for FY 2006

Much of the data we analyze for this annual report come from the Department of Human Resources' Client Information System (CIS) and (for out-of-home care) the Foster and Adoption Child Tracking System (FACTS). Starting in February of 2006, DHR began the transition to its Maryland Children's Electronic Social Services Information Exchange (MD CHESSIE). In the process, the ability to obtain accurate statewide data was compromised. Full-year data are not available for Calvert, Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, Saint Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. In the case of Harford County only six months of data for FY 2006 are available. For the other counties, 10-11 months of data are available. Only data shown as coming from CRBC case reviews is exempt from this caveat on the accuracy and completeness of data.

## INTRODUCTION

Maryland's child welfare system was marked by three important transitions during the period covered by this report:

- Martin O'Malley was elected governor, reflecting a likely change of all or nearly all cabinet secretaries. CRBC was asked to be part of the planning by the O'Malley transition team. The committee covering the Department of Human Resources was co-chaired by Douglas Nelson, Chief Executive Officer of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Emelda Johnson, former Secretary of Human Resources under Parris Glendening. (See the next section for excerpts from the Report to the Transition Team by the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children, which CRBC chairs.) The new Governor certainly faced a challenge in the child welfare area, but also had an opportunity to focus management resources in a way that benefits vulnerable children and their families.
- Implementation of MD CHESSIE. The Department of Human Resources began operating its new statewide automated child welfare information system. Harford County began pilot operations in February 2006. In June, all of the Eastern Shore counties (except Cecil) were converted to CHESSIE operations.
- CRBC Transformation. CRBC and DHR continued to plan for reform of the Child Welfare Quality Assurance System. The Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006 was signed into law and was largely compatible with the planning CRBC and DHR had undertaken. As of December 2006, CRBC and DHR had not yet signed a memorandum of agreement but were actively continuing to negotiate toward that end.

## STATE OF THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

### CFSR Ranked Maryland among the lowest states

The federal government rated Maryland’s child welfare system using its Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process during state fiscal year 2004. Maryland was the 47th State to go through the process. The federal government has developed 14 factors to consider in evaluating each State’s effectiveness:

Type of Measure	Domain	Factor
Outcome	Safety 1	Children are protected from abuse and neglect
Outcome	Safety 2	Children safely maintained in their own homes
Outcome	Permanency 1	Children have permanency and stability of living arrangements
Outcome	Permanency 2	Children experience continuity of family relationships
Outcome	Well-Being 1	Families have enhanced capacity to care for children
Outcome	Well-Being 2	Children receive services to meet educational needs
Outcome	Well-Being 3	Children receive services to meet health needs
Systemic Factor		Statewide Information System
Systemic Factor		Training
Systemic Factor		Service Array
Systemic Factor		Agency Responsiveness to the Community
Systemic Factor		Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, Retention
Systemic Factor		Agency Responsiveness to the Community
Systemic Factor		Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, Retention

There is an elaborate methodology of assembling statistics, case data, and opinions to perform this complex assessment. Information is gathered at the State level and in three selected jurisdictions (which must include the jurisdiction with the highest number of child welfare cases).

For the major outcomes, a State must score 90% to be rated in **substantial conformity (SC)**; otherwise the rating is, **area needing improvement (ANI)**. Out of 14 elements – 7 outcomes and 7 systemic factors – Maryland received SC on 3 and ANI on 11. The Program Improvement Plan must address the 11 ANI areas.

Maryland’s results were unsatisfactory. The federal government sets very high standards. No state was rated SC on more than two outcome areas. Maryland was among 24 states that had zero SC ratings in the outcome area and among 13 states that had 3 or fewer SC ratings among the systemic factors. Only six other states and Puerto Rico had as few as 3 SC ratings overall.

The worst outcome area for Maryland was, “children have permanency and stability of living arrangements.” The score was 26.7%, compared to the standard of 90%. The federal evaluators found that:

- The permanency goal was continuously in the child’s best interests during the audit period in only 34% of cases reviewed.

- Court practice – especially, ordering futile plans of reunification - was identified as a key barrier. The score for implementing reunification plans was 38%.
- The waiver of reunification is underutilized – thus reinforcing a key CRBC finding as documented in Exhibit XII, page 25.
- Plans of long-term foster care are used excessively, even for young children.
- Parents are not receiving adequate reunification services.
- Effort toward adoption is insufficient, including delays in termination of parental rights; failure to use mediation, a known best practice; and inconsistent use of dual licensure. The score for implementing adoption was 42%.

### Program Improvement Plan

During fiscal year 2006 the State was in its second year of implementing its federally required Program Improvement Plan. When the PIP was made public, we found that it did not sufficiently address root causes of poor performance, stating:

*“During the process [of developing the PIP], however, it became evident that the purpose was redefined as compliance with federal standards and that the PIP would promise minimal improvement.”*

### CRBC’s Overall Assessment

Beginning on page 10, CRBC presents its analysis of FY 2006 data. We are unable to discern that type of rapid and far-reaching improvements that are needed in light of Maryland’s poor performance. We have seen caseloads decline somewhat (in FY 2005), a few of the areas tested in case reviews by the local child protection panels have shown some improvement. There is a modest decrease in the number of children entering placement. But Maryland is still a State that increasingly utilizes high-cost placements as a primary child welfare intervention. The quality and quantity of services to families have not shown significant improvement. Service planning and teamwork still get low scores in the child protection reviews, the patterns of entry, exit, and length of stay in care are largely unchanged, but, where there are changes, they are largely not in the desired direction. Adoption and relative placement are down while re-entry is somewhat increased.

### Implementation of CHESSIE

Certain problems with CHESSIE threaten the safety of children and families and CRBC, along with its partners in the Coalition to Protect Maryland’s Children, called for rapid corrective action;

- A poorly functioning interface with DHR's legacy system (Client Information System (CIS)) makes the creation of duplicate records in CHESSIE or the insertion of information into the wrong person's record likely.
- Caseworkers and supervisor have no mechanism to correct duplicate records or certain other errors.
- CHESSIE erects barrier to communication among workers rather than promoting communication as advertised.

In addition, CRBC has found that the CHESSIE conversion program made systematic errors in setting up out-of-home care cases for children with records in the legacy system (CIS/FACTS), in effect creating erroneous information out of correct information.

CRBC and the Coalition called for the following improvements:

- Any screener, caseworker, or supervisor who has responsibility to serve a family can access all information in CHESSIE about that family, including previous referrals and investigations and records saved under duplicate client identification numbers.
- CHESSIE does not overwrite historical data in CIS.
- Erroneous data entered into CHESSIE can be corrected.

#### Excerpts from Transition Report of the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children

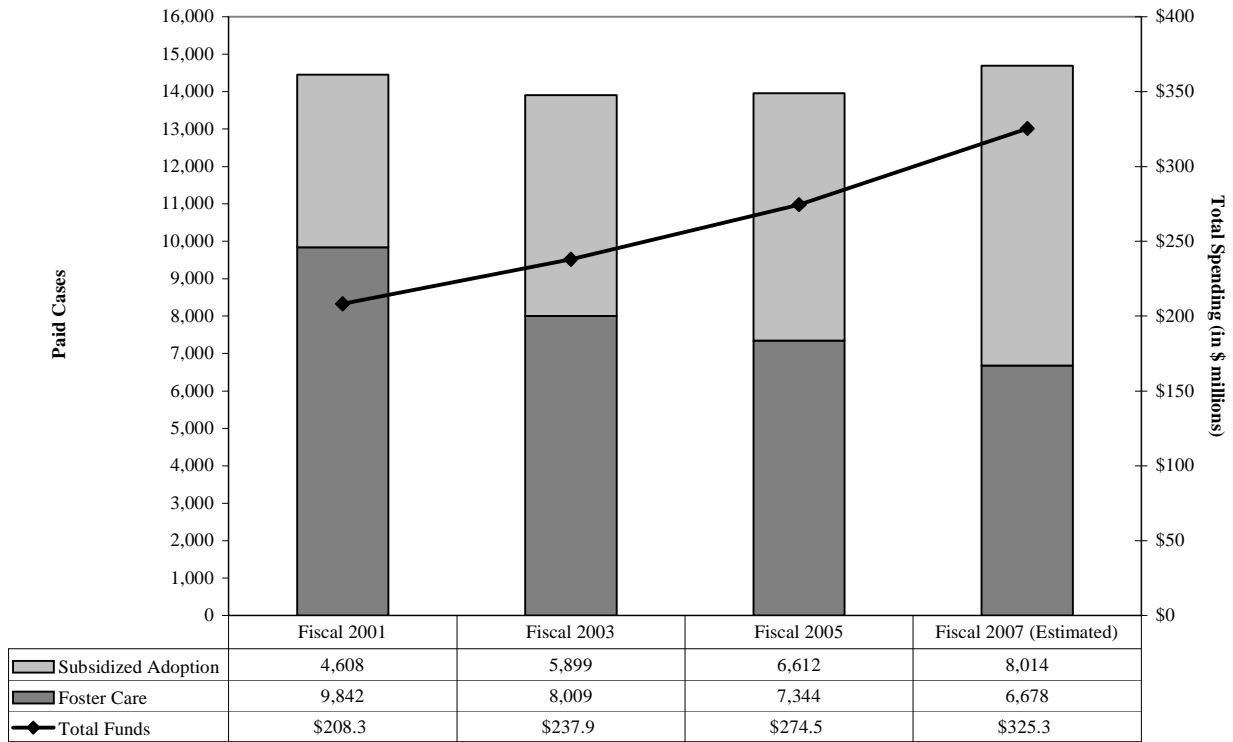
*The entitlement portion of the child welfare program demands ever increasing spending but unfortunately has not shown measurable improvement in outcomes. Mistakes can profoundly harm children by exposing them to life-threatening conditions or unnecessarily separating them from their families. Some of the basics are (See Exhibit A for more information):*

- *Nearly 100,000 children are touched by the system each year, mostly by being involved in child protective services investigations.*
- *Over 10,000 children in State Custody are in out-of-home placements.*
- *The average age of children in care is increasing, as children who entered care years ago "age in place" and exit as young adults, often unprepared for self-sufficient independence.*
- *The number of foster families declined by over 1/3 from 2001 to 2005.*
- *The State has inadequate numbers of qualified caseworkers.*
- *Between fiscal 2001 and fiscal 2007, total spending on foster care maintenance payments and subsidized adoptions increased by more than half (56%), or \$117 million.*
- *Outcomes related to safety, permanency, and length-of-stay have remained virtually unchanged for years.*

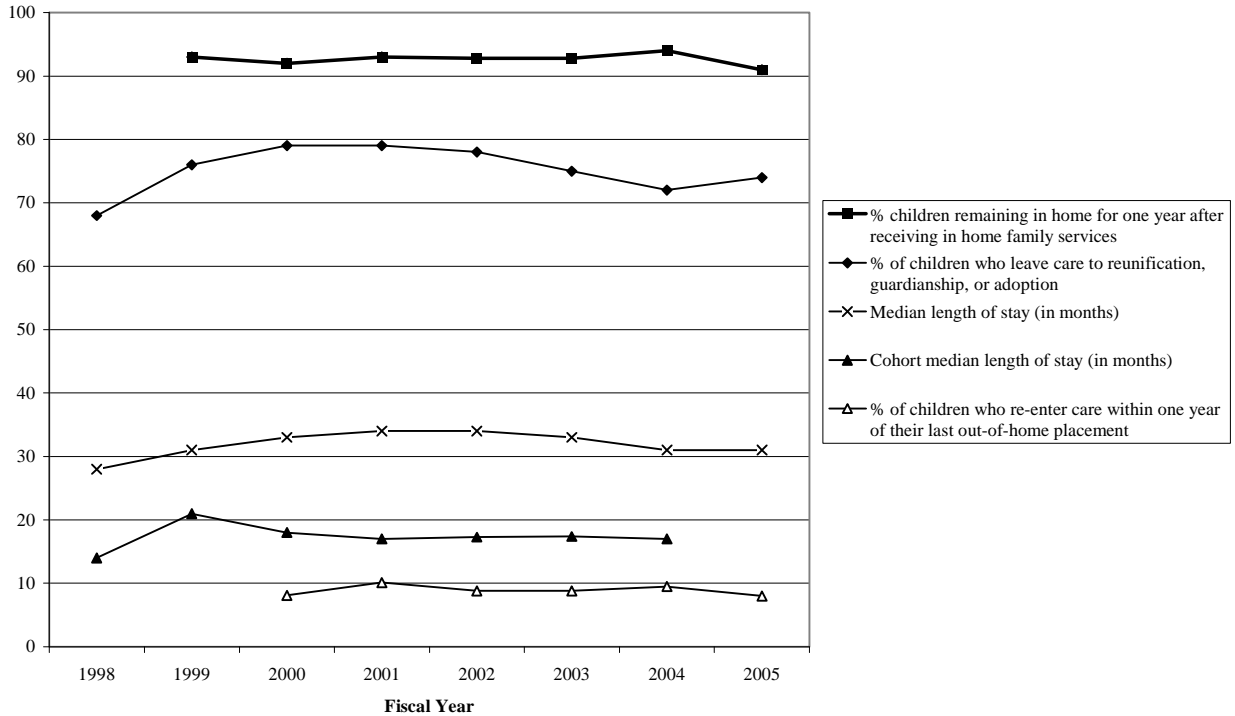


## Exhibit A

**Despite little change in the total number of foster care and subsidized adoption cases, spending is increasing dramatically.**



**Key child welfare outcome measures have changed little in recent years.**



## MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT

The following recommended priorities were developed by the Children's Legislative Advocacy Committee to respond to the overall assessment of the child welfare system as presented in the previous section. The State Board adopted these priority issues in June 2005 to be acted upon in FY 2006.

### **Improve Accountability for Child Welfare Services**

*June 2005 Statement:* DHR is responding to the Report of the Task Force on Child Welfare Accountability (HB 1197 – Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2005 – passed the House but not the Senate in the 2005 session) and also to the federal Child and Family Services Review, which mandates improvement in the quality assurance system. DHR is negotiating with CRBC about aspects of the new accountability system, which will include:

- 1) Specifying and measuring the results we want for children and families served;
- 2) Developing an in-depth case review methodology that incorporates the selected outcome measures;
- 3) Establishing a structured process for assessing client, stakeholder, and employee perspectives;
- 4) Creating a method for combining the above three elements into a comprehensive periodic assessment of the State and every local jurisdiction **and implementing needed improvements.**

*Results During FY 2006:* HB 799 – The Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006 – was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor (<http://mlis.state.md.us/2006rs/billfile/hb0799.htm>). It:

- 1) Specifies and measures desired results for children and families;
- 2) Requires an in-depth methodology to assess the quality of casework services;
- 3) Creates a process for local and State assessment and improvement planning.

In addition, the State Board continued to plan with DHR for implementing a new QA system that is compatible with the accountability act. The Act addresses the subject of actually implementing needed improvement by asking DHR and the Department of Management and Budget to report on what flexibility exists in the DHR budget to move resources into areas that are shown to need improvement by the accountability process.

*Related CRBC Priorities for 2007:* Implement the Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006

### **Continue to Implement the Child Welfare Workforce Act of 1998**

*June 2005 Statement:* Training, policy dissemination, and quality of supervision should be priorities for the DHR and should focus on child protection, permanency, placement reform, substance abuse treatment, and accountability. A training academy is being established with \$1.7 million in State and federal funds. In the past year, the DHR has

increased frontline staff from approximately 1,750 to over 1,900, allowing considerable progress toward the long-term goal of meeting caseload standards established by the Child Welfare League of America.

Results: HB 799 also addressed workforce issues with the following two mandates:

- 1) The Secretary and the Secretary of Budget and Management shall ensure that sufficient numbers of qualified child welfare staff, as specified in Article 88A, § 3A of the Code, are hired and retained in order to achieve caseload ratios in child welfare services consistent with the Child Welfare League of America caseload standards. (FL § 5-1310(a).)
- 2) “The Department shall establish and maintain a child welfare training academy....” (FL § 5-1311(a).) The statute permits CRBC members and staff to be included in the trainees at the academy; however, so far, DHR has not agreed to allow our participation.

The progress on the legislative front was not matched by progress at reducing caseloads. According to a legislative report (see Child Welfare analysis at: [http://mlis.state.md.us/2006rs/budget\\_docs/All/Operating/operating\\_analysis\\_doc.htm](http://mlis.state.md.us/2006rs/budget_docs/All/Operating/operating_analysis_doc.htm)), The number of filled positions dropped from 1,900 to about 1,825 as of January 1, 2006.

Related CRBC Priorities for 2007: Improve the Child Welfare Workforce. This priority stresses training of staff as well as reducing caseloads.

### **Move funds toward the early intervention/prevention end of the child welfare service spectrum**

June 2005 Statement: Costs to keep children in placements have been rising by nearly \$30 million per year for the past three years, while other child welfare and family services have lost funding. The number of foster families (average cost: \$600 per month) fell 17% between December 2001 and December 2004, while the number of children in group care (average cost: \$5,000 per month) rose 34%. Most children are better off in family care, and it is a tragic folly to pay more for inappropriate care. We believe that investing in family support, family preservation, substance abuse treatment, reunification, kinship care, and family foster care could eliminate as much as half of the annual increase. Our *Enhanced Family Care* proposal outlines a specific program that could keep children in kinship or with foster families.

Results: No major progress was made on this issue. The short supply of foster homes continued and more children were inappropriately placed in group homes. However, the State did agree to increase foster family reimbursement rates by \$100 per month (an 18.7% increase in the lowest rate) and added \$2.2 million added for campaigns and services to recruit and retain foster families and for respite care. In addition, \$ 3 million were made available to increase the monthly rate for and the number of children covered by the guardianship assistance program. These guardianship subsidy funds were for 2007 so this report cannot assess the effectiveness of this particular initiative. When the FY 2007 budget was released in January of 2006, claims were made that

about \$5.6 million in new funds were available for family preservation services and flex funding for emergency services. Investigation eventually showed that funds were merely shifted from one part of the executive branch to another.

Related CRBC Priorities for 2007: 1. Spend Reform Funds Wisely. This priority was based on claims of new child welfare funding, some of which evaporated upon careful investigation. 2. Rebuild Traditional Family Foster Care.

### **Improve permanency outcomes for children in out-of-home placement**

June 2005 Statement: Maryland scored 27% on the federal Child and Family Services Review in the area entitled, “Children have permanency and stability in their living situation,” compared with the federal expectation of 90%. In addition to the reforms listed above (accountability, workforce and earlier intervention), Maryland needs far-reaching reform of courts: more judges, masters, and attorneys; a one-family, one-judge policy; and strict policy and accountability measures to avoid delays in considering permanency issues.

Results: According to CRBC data (which are derived from CIS/FACTS and which have special limitations for 2006 as explained in the Preface), the projected average length of stay increased from 33 months for FY 2005 to 35 months in FY 2006. The number of children returned to parents stayed the same as the year before, but the number placed permanently in the custody of relatives dropped by nearly a third from 611 to 422. The number of adoptions dropped slightly, hovering below 600 per year (the State’s goal is about 900).

Related CRBC Priorities for 2007: Improve permanency outcomes for children in out-of-home placement

### **Adopt policies and practices that protect children from abuse and neglect**

June 2005 Statement: The legal definition of abuse should be strengthened. Recent appellate decisions have favored a parent’s right to inflict corporal punishment, even to the point of injury, against the child’s right to be protected. In addition, teachers and other authority figures can use their influence to solicit “consensual” sex from teens. The State continues to tolerate disregard and defiance of the statute requiring reporting of abuse and neglect. We need to assure that persons with certain criminal histories cannot be hired to work with children. Workforce and accountability reforms should set the stage for more thorough investigations of abuse and neglect.

Results: First-degree child abuse was made a crime of violence. Three bills were passed to improve the operation of group homes after an expose in the *Baltimore Sun*. The legislature required DHR to produce a study on differential response to child maltreatment reports. Overall, the findings from our case review of child protection

investigations were modestly improved over those from FY 2005 (see below). In its FY 2005 report, CRBC recommended that the functionality of the Baltimore City Call Center (which receives complaints of child abuse and neglect) should be expanded statewide. The city operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Other local departments have a phone machine when their offices are closed directing calls to the police who can contact an on-call worker. We recommended “*The Call Center function should be assumed by the Social Services Administration and operated on a statewide basis for both Child and Adult Protective Services.*” No action was taken on this recommendation.

*Related CRBC Priorities for 2007:* Adopt policies and practices that protect children from abuse and neglect

## CRBC TRANSFORMATION

In December 2004, DHR Secretary McCabe asked CRBC to participate in a process of integrating its operations into the Quality Assurance system that DHR was developing. DHR's efforts were in response to two major factors:

1. The federal government's call for revising the Quality Assurance system; the existing system had been criticized during the Child and Family Services Review as being insufficiently focused on child and family outcomes.
2. The activity around the Task Force on Child Welfare Accountability that had been established by the General Assembly and had just issued its report.

In accepting the Secretary's offer, CRBC adopted several important goals:

- Retain our basic mission of independent monitoring and advocacy
- Rationalize the review process to get maximum efficiency and effectiveness for the hours invested by volunteers, CRBC staff and local department staff.
- Get child welfare accountability legislation enacted along the lines recommended by the Task Force and make our operations consistent with the new law.

As of the end of calendar year 2006, DHR and CRBC were negotiating over a draft Memorandum of Agreement. Some of its main features were:

- Local child protection panels and local out-of-placement review boards would use a new, in-depth case review tool that would be jointly developed. It would be similar to the case review instrument used in CFSR but customized to Maryland. It would be used to provide data for local system assessments (see below).
- Out-of-home placement review boards would continue to conduct traditional reviews that generate a report of findings and recommendations to the court. This type of review would be enhanced with findings about preserving family connections and provision of health and education services to the child.
- Local panels and boards would participate in a local assessment process, both contributing data and making suggestions for system improvements. They would also monitor implementation of local program improvement plans.
- Community forums that local panels were required to conduct as part of CAPTA could also provide information to the public about local assessments.
- The CRBC State Board would participate in the State-level assessment process.

CRBC approached two key legislators about introducing legislation that would conform CRBC's statute to the new operational plan and MOA.



# CHILD PROTECTION DATA ANALYSIS

## Exhibit I CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS FOR FY04, FY05, AND FY06

Jurisdiction	FY 04		FY 05		FY 06	
	# of Investigations	% Indicated	# of Investigations	% Indicated	# of Investigations	% Indicated
Allegany	762	26%	663	24%	348	N/A
Anne Arundel	2854	18%	2,965	17%	1239	N/A
Baltimore County	3051	22%	3,056	22%	1286	N/A
Calvert	422	15%	406	13%	147	N/A
Caroline	320	26%	344	13%	131	N/A
Carroll	896	19%	893	16%	494	N/A
Cecil	643	22%	711	17%	364	N/A
Charles	738	19%	700	16%	267	N/A
Dorchester	279	16%	271	17%	124	N/A
Frederick	1,222	28%	1,553	20%	650	N/A
Garrett	201	12%	180	16%	98	N/A
Harford	1,149	16%	1,153	16%	517	N/A
Howard	1,110	14%	1,178	15%	484	N/A
Kent	106	9%	113	12%	51	N/A
Montgomery	2,590	15%	2,989	14%	1287	N/A
Prince George's	3,353	18%	3,440	16%	1579	N/A
Queen Anne's	236	9%	258	22%	107	N/A
St. Mary's	344	17%	401	14%	183	N/A
Somerset	336	19%	304	18%	144	N/A
Talbot	251	20%	255	18%	112	N/A
Washington	1,683	25%	1,719	24%	783	N/A
Wicomico	1,050	22%	962	19%	405	N/A
Worcester	489	20%	479	20%	242	N/A
Baltimore City	6,152	27%	6,518	28%	3,062	N/A
Statewide	30,237	21%	31,501	20%	14,104	N/A

Source: Maryland Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration

When Child Protective Services receives a complaint regarding alleged child abuse or neglect, a screener interviews the reporter to determine if the case should be investigated or screened out (not investigated). If investigated, one of three findings will be assigned:

- Ruled out - means that abuse and/or neglect did not occur;
- Unsubstantiated - means that there is an insufficient amount of evidence to support a finding of either indicated or ruled out; or
- Indicated – means that there is credible evidence that has not been satisfactorily refuted that abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse did occur.

Exhibit I (previous page) displays the number of investigations and percentage of cases with a finding of indicated for Maryland's twenty-four jurisdictions. Unfortunately, the results for the findings are not available for FY 2006 *and only the first six months of FY 2006 are available on a statewide basis.*

### **Findings from the Child Protection Panels**

Case reviews and system reviews are the two primary methods the panels use to assess the local child protection system. From these activities the panels develop recommendations and strategies for system level improvement.

Case reviews provide useful information about how evidence and decision-making are documented, what services were provided, and how agencies work together for families and children. This type of case review is not a tool for improving case management for the individual case being reviewed. Each panel has a Case Review Committee composed of at least 3 members trained to conduct the reviews.

The Case Review Committees evaluate five functions of child protection systems:

- Reporting child abuse and neglect;
- Receiving and screening child abuse and neglect allegations;
- Investigating and assessing child abuse and neglect allegations, including gathering information, assessing children's safety, assessing risk of future maltreatment, and making findings of whether abuse or neglect occurred as alleged;
- Responding to child abuse and neglect, including intra-agency teamwork ("staffings"), multi-disciplinary consultation, service planning and provision, placement, appeals, and several court-related functions; and
- Supervision and administration.

Each function has criteria to evaluate effectiveness. For any given child protection function, an agency is considered to have performed effectively if it has taken necessary measures to satisfy the criteria listed on the case review evaluation form and any other necessary measures to protect children. The reviewers may decide which criteria under each function are applicable in a given instance. The majority vote is checked for each

case function<sup>1</sup>. Exhibit II provides the number reviews conducted in FY 04, FY05, and FY06 by jurisdiction.

**Exhibit II**  
**Number of Child Protection Reviews Completed by Panels**

	<b>FY 04</b> <b># of reviews</b>	<b>FY05</b> <b># of reviews</b>	<b>FY 06</b> <b># of reviews</b>
Allegany	5	5	4
Anne Arundel	2	11	13
Baltimore County	4	4	0
Calvert	0	3	4
Caroline	0	0	0
Carroll	2	0	0
Cecil	1	0	0
Charles	6	3	3
Dorchester	0	1	0
Frederick	3	0	0
Garrett	3	2	2
Harford	1	3	3
Howard	4	3	0
Kent	0	0	0
Montgomery	1	4	0
Prince George's	10	8	9
Queen Anne's	3	4	0
St. Mary's	1	2	1
Somerset	4	5	3
Talbot	0	0	0
Washington	7	9	9
Wicomico	0	0	0
Worcester	5	9	4
Baltimore City	10	16	16
Statewide	76	92	71

Source: CRBC information system – case reviews

Local child protection citizen review panels (as designees of the State Board) conducted 71 case reviews on cases with a finding of indicated maltreatment. A brief summary of

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<sup>1</sup> For a full report on the criteria used for evaluating functions, go to CRBC's website and select Child Protection Annual Report 2002.

findings is displayed in Exhibit III. There was some improvement noted over 2005 in Information Gathering, Risk Assessment, and Placement functions. The court process garnered a lower rating than in 2005. Continuing established patterns, service planning, intra-agency staffing, and multi-disciplinary teaming were the areas most in need of improvement.

**Exhibit III  
Summary of Panels' Findings**

	FY 04		FY 05		FY 06	
	# Applicable	% Rated Effective	# Applicable	% Rated Effective	# Applicable	% Rated Effective
Reporting function considers how well agencies, professionals, and other citizens fulfilled mandated reporting responsibilities or how well agencies have promoted community awareness of child abuse and neglect laws.	72	93%	90	94%	70	100%
Receiving and Screening reports includes whether reporting is accessible to agencies and the public, whether appropriate information is assembled and considered to determine if and when an investigation should begin.	71	86%	90	87%	68	96%
Information Gathering – includes contacting and questioning individuals, reviewing prior history, and assembling documents.	72	78%	88	64%	66	88%
Safety Assessment – includes the process of determining whether a child is safe, which must be completed whenever circumstances change sufficiently to create a significant new possibility of imminent maltreatment.	71	73%	87	82%	67	79%
Risk Assessment – includes estimating the possible harm to the child in the future due to exposure to various risk factors as determined by SSA.	72	75%	87	70%	66	85%
Finding/disposition – includes determining if maltreatment occurred as described in the report(s) received.	71	87%	88	93%	67	91%
Supervision and administration – includes whether agencies have sufficient resources and whether they are organized and managed to control an effective child protection process.	70	77%	85	81%	61	80%

	FY 04		FY 05		FY 06	
Service planning – includes whether service planning uses best practices and addresses the factors identified in assessments and whether agencies work well together.	61	67%	73	71%	46	70%
Safety response – includes whether safety of all involved children was continually assessed, whether all maltreatment issues were addressed by services delivered, and whether monitoring was adequate.	-	-	-	-	53	81%
Staffing – includes whether intra-agency written and oral communication is used, as needed, among team members and at key transition points in the service process so that multiple perspectives are included in decision-making, information is not lost, and families are not subject to contradictory statements or directives from different agency personnel.	52	63%	65	74%	47	72%
Multi-disciplinary team – includes whether inter-agency and interdisciplinary communication is used at key decision points so that multiple perspectives are included in decision-making, information is not lost, and families are not subject to contradictory statements or directives from different agencies.	38	50%	26	62%	21	62%
Placement – includes whether children were removed from their families when and only when necessary for their protection and whether the placement process properly protects their safety.	35	63%	44	80%	30	97%
CINA/CINS – includes whether court protection for children is sought when appropriate, whether the court process operates as intended, and whether it protects children.	26	69%	35	94%	27	81%

Source: CRBC Information System – Case Reviews

## OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT DATA ANALYSIS

Maryland had 124 (3%) fewer out-of-home placement entries during FY06 as compared to FY05. The characteristics of the population entering placement showed varying degrees of change as shown in Exhibit IV.

**Exhibit IV**  
**Characteristics of Children Entering Placement during FY 04, FY 05, and FY 06**

Characteristics				Relative Rate of Change between FY 05 and FY 06
	2004	2005	2006	
# of entries	3,876	3,773	3,649	-3%
% African-American	64%	64%	65%	+1%
% White	28%	29%	29%	-0%
% Hispanic	2%	2%	1%	-55%
% under 5 years of age (at placement)	38%	36%	36%	0%
% between 5-11 years of age	29%	31%	30%	-3%
% between 12-18 years of age	33%	34%	34%	0%

Source: CRBC's Information System

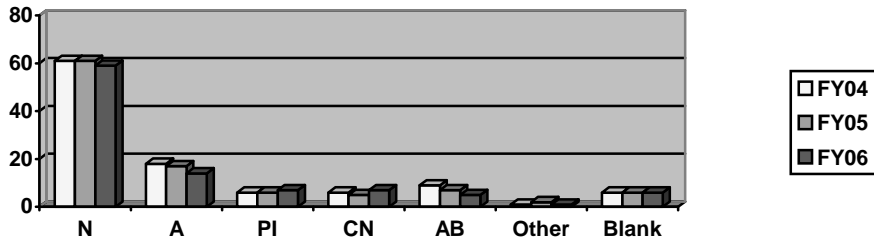
A comparison of FY05 entries with FY06 shows:

- The modest trend to reduced number of children entering placement continued;
- There was a significant decrease in the number and percentage of Hispanic children entering placement; and
- The age distribution is quite stable.

The entry reasons remain relatively stable (Exhibit V).



**Exhibit V  
Primary Reasons Children Entered Placement during  
FY 04, FY 05, and FY 06**



**Abbreviations**

**N** – neglect  
**A** – abuse including physical and sexual abuse  
**PI** – parental illness  
**CN** – child’s special needs including behavior problems  
**AB** – abandonment  
**Other** – includes death or incarceration of parent or caregiver

Source: CRBC’s Information System

During FY 06;

- Neglect comprised 59% of the entries into out-of-home placement, a slight decrease from 61% in the two prior years;
- Parental Illness and Child’s Special Needs increased to 7% each; and
- Fifty percent of the FY 06 entries were from Baltimore City (Exhibit X), down from 53% in FY 05.

**Length Of Stay in Out-of-Home Placement**

CRBC uses three methods to evaluate length of stay in out-of-home placement (for additional information on definitions and measurements see [www.dhr.state.md.us/crbc](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/crbc)).

**Actual Average Length of Stay (AALS)** - Measures how long children who left placement during a specified period had been in out-of-home placement. This method can provide an overly optimistic perspective if a large percentage of children exiting in a given year had short-term stays. This method does not consider children who are currently in care and may have been in care for a long period.

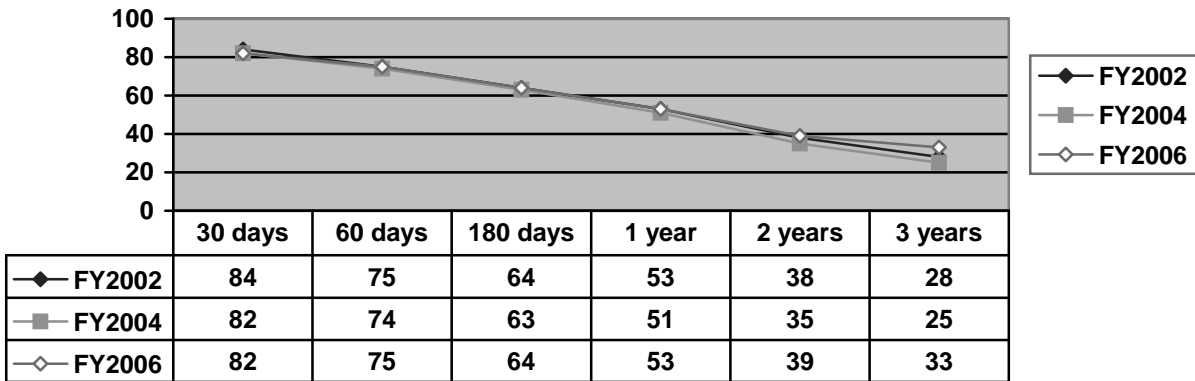
**Projected Average Length of Stay (PALS)** - Equals the average daily population during the reporting period divided by the number of exits during the reporting period. This method Include all children who were in out-of-placement for the reporting period and is less affected by children with short stays.

Current measures of AALS and PALS are shown in Exhibit X.

**Cohort Analysis** –Under this third method of measuring length of stay, a group of children who entered placement during an interval are followed to see what percentage leave by specified times. (At Day 0, 100% of children are in placement.) Exhibit VI shows that a child’s chances of leaving out-of-home placement drastically decline after the first year in care because it takes successively longer (i.e. 30 days, then 120 days,

then half a year, then a full year) to get approximately the same 11-15% decline in the proportion remaining in care.

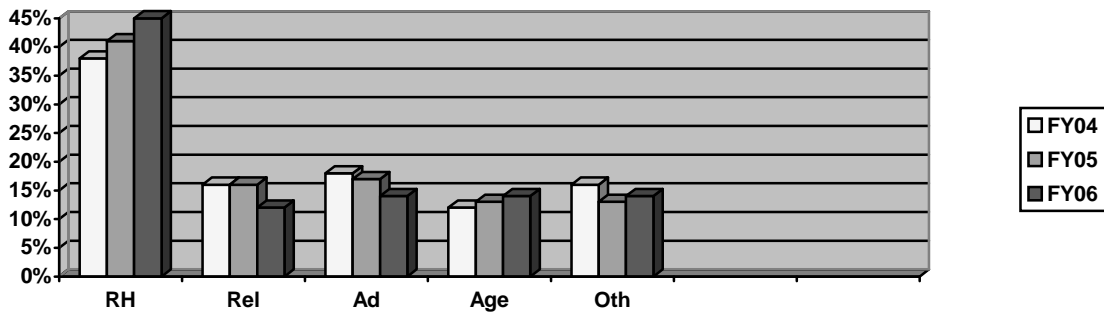
**Exhibit VI**  
**Percentage of Children Remaining in OOHP After Specified Intervals**



Source: CRBC's Information System

One out of three children will exit placement within 6 months of entry. These children will have a higher likelihood of being reunited with family (parents or relatives) than children who had a longer length of stay.

**Exhibit VII**  
**Case Closing Reasons for FY04, FY05, and FY06**



Source: CRBC's Information System

The number of children who left care fell by more than 700 between FY 2004 and FY 2006 – from 4,234 to 3,519. While the percentage of children returning home rose by several percentage points, the number returning home was very slightly fewer. The number placed with relatives or for adoption fell considerably. In FY 2006 only 422 children were placed with relatives versus 611 in FY 2005 and 676 in 2004.

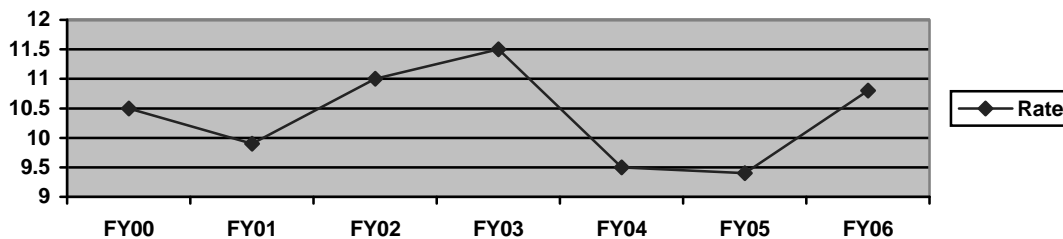
Jointly, returned home, relative placement, and adoption, represented 72% of the case closings for FY04, 74% in FY05, and 71% in FY06. The established trend of one-third of children entering out-of-home placement being between the ages of 12-18 makes it

more difficult to achieve desired permanency outcomes since, historically, older children have been harder to place in permanent homes.

**Re-entry into out-of-home placement**

CRBC tracks the percentage of children who re-enter placement within one year of leaving placement in order to give a perspective on the appropriateness of permanent placements and the effectiveness of after-care services

**Exhibit VIII  
Re-entry Rate into Out-of-Home Placement for FY99 – FY05**



Source: CRBC's Information System

NOTE: The re-entry rate for a given year is based on children who exited placement in the prior fiscal year (since many of the re-entries would be in the given year).

After two years of lower re-entry rates, the 2006 results show an upward trend to 10.8%. For the children who entered placement in FY 2006, 30% had had a prior episode sometime in their lives.

**Maryland's Total Out-of-Home Placement Population**

Data on all children in out-of-home placement on the last day of the fiscal year (June 30th) for 2004, 2005, and 2006 are shown in Exhibit IX.

**Exhibit IX  
Profile of Maryland's Out-of-Home Population for FY 01, FY 04, and FY 05**

Characteristics	2004	2005	2006	Rel. Rate of Change
# of children	10738	10,441	10,520	+1%
% African-American	76%	74%	74%	NC
% White	20%	21%	22%	+5%
% Hispanic	1%	1%	<1%	-0.4%
% under 5 years of age (end of FY)	18%	16%	20%	+25%
% between 5-11 years of age	27%	28%	24%	-14%
% between 12-18 years of age	42%	42%	41%	-2%
% over 18 years of age	12%	13%	14%	+7%

Source: CRBC Information System

This exhibit suggests that in FY 2006, children under the age of five lingered in placement. Note that Exhibit IV (p. 15) does *not* show an unusual influx of younger children entering placement.

**Exhibit X**  
**Out-of Home Placement Case Flow by Jurisdiction for FY06**

Jurisdiction	# in Plcmt on June 30, 2005	# Entered Placement During FY06	# Left Placement During FY06	# in Plcmt on June 30, 2006	Projected Average Length of Stay (months)	Actual Average Length of Stay (months)
Allegany	113	57	42	128	34	18
Anne Arundel	268	111	95	284	35	25
Baltimore County	697	408	407	698	21	23
Calvert	60	14	21	53	32	25
Caroline	43	32	17	58	36	15
Carroll	52	34	28	58	24	20
Cecil	72	92	53	111	21	10
Charles	118	24	36	106	37	44
Dorchester	33	25	21	37	20	16
Frederick	187	41	63	165	34	25
Garrett	39	19	21	37	22	12
Harford	178	138	79	237	32	27
Howard	117	42	52	107	26	20
Kent	16	6	4	18	51	42
Montgomery	522	232	224	530	28	21
Prince George's	606	198	210	594	34	41
Queen Anne's	23	14	15	22	18	28
St. Mary's	81	42	40	83	25	19
Somerset	58	22	22	58	32	32
Talbot	38	12	16	34	27	27
Washington	276	186	158	304	22	17
Wicomico	131	79	40	170	45	37
Worcester	40	13	12	41	41	20
Baltimore City	6672	1807	1877	6602	42	40
Statewide	10440	3648	3553	10535	35	33

*Source: CRBC/CIS*

Both the PALS and AALS increased compared with FY 2005. Last years PALS was 33 months and the AALS was 26 months. This, coupled with the results in Exhibits VII and VIII, show that urgency to achieve permanency dissipated substantially despite the dire results from the Child and Family Services Review.

One note of caution is that CHESSIE transition could have suppressed some of the exit and case closing information that would normally be present

## FINDINGS FROM OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT REVIEW BOARDS

Case reviews for children in out of home placement are proactive and intended to provide oversight and advocacy at the individual case level. Child protection reviews are intended to be reflective.

The findings presented in Exhibits XI and XII represent the 5,698 citizen reviews that were conducted during FY 05 and not the status of all children in Maryland's out-of-home system. In rare instances, a child may have a citizen review more than once in a year.<sup>2</sup>

**Exhibit XI  
Summary of Permanency Plans by Adequacy of Progress  
For Fiscal Years 2004, 2005, and 2006**

	FY 2004			FY 2005			FY 2006		
	Number & Percent of Plans		Progress Rated Adeq.	Number & Percent of Plans		Progress Rated Adeq.	Number & Percent of Plans		Progress Rated Adeq.
	#	%		#	%		#	%	
Return Home	1952	33%	89%	2144	36%	90%	1720	30%	92%
Relative Placement	1117	19%	90%	1119	19%	88%	1108	19%	89%
Adoption	1187	20%	83%	1052	18%	88%	764	12%	87%
Other	1601	28%	96%	1556	26%	96%	2165	38%	92%

Source: CRBC's Information System – Case Reviews

In Fiscal Year 2006:

- The percentage of cases reviewed with a plan other than return home, relative placement, or adoption increased;
- The pattern of finding adequate progress was little changed but findings of adequate progress decreased with “other” plans;

### Reviews in Which Board Requests Corrective Action

Regulations require local departments to respond in writing to reach report, indicating whether they accept the board's recommendation.

<sup>2</sup> A summary of the out-of-home placement review process is available on CRBC's website.



Exhibit XII summarizes the number of reviews for each jurisdiction and indicates the following:

- Columns 2 - 8 show how many times the board disagreed with the specific type of finding;
- Column 9 shows the total times the board disagreed in a jurisdiction;
- Column 10 shows the cumulative value of the disagreements for each jurisdiction. The total number of disagreements will be larger than the number of cases since a case may have multiple disagreements.
- Column 11 shows the total number of reviews that were conducted in the jurisdiction.
- Column 12 shows the percentage of the total reviews that had at least one disagreement. These cases comprise the “advocacy caseload”. In these instances a person higher than a supervisor must respond in writing to the boards recommendations.
- Column 13 shows the percentage of advocacy cases that were returned from the local departments; and
- Column 14 shows the percentage of returned advocacy cases where the local department of social services agreed with CRBC’s recommendations.

Overall, problems requiring corrective action were found in 1,399 of 5,698 reviews conducted, a rate of 25%.

Disagreement with TPR dominated the findings with 50% of the disagreements in FY 06, as opposed to 34% in FY 05 and 06. Adequacy of progress is the next highest category of corrective action findings followed by non-concurrences with the permanency plan.

The written response rate for corrective action reviews rose from 76% in 2005 to 82% in FY 2006.

Of the 82% of reports that were returned to CRBC, the local departments agreed with the boards’ recommendations 75% of the time

**Exhibit XII  
Corrective Action Case Review Recommendations and Disposition by County**

Columns	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Jurisdiction	Waiver of Reunific'n	TPR	Non-concur with Perm Plan	Permanency Progress	Safety Protocols	Risk Indicated	Placement Plan	# of Disagreements	# of advocacy children	Total Reviews	% of total reviews with at least one disagreement	DSS Return Rate	DSS rate of Agreement on returned reports
Allegany	0	19	6	17	0	2	0	44	28	125	22%	100%	96%
Anne Arundel	0	25	29	27	7	7	3	98	55	164	34%	85%	40%
Baltimore	1	28	30	8	1	20	0	88	70	436	16%	84%	61%
Calvert	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	6	6	52	12%	100%	100%
Caroline	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0%		
Carroll	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	34	6%	100%	50%
Cecil	0	9	2	6	0	2	4	23	18	61	30%	78%	86%
Charles	0	10	3	4	0	0	0	17	16	85	19%	100%	100%
Dorchester	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	7	5	30	17%	0%	0%
Frederick	0	17	14	11	3	7	1	53	38	152	25%	89%	76%
Garrett	0	12	3	3	0	2	0	20	15	52	29%	100%	80%
Harford	1	16	24	6	1	7	2	57	39	133	29%	100%	72%
Howard	0	6	6	4	0	1	0	17	15	62	24%	100%	73%
Kent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0%		
Montgomery	0	17	8	10	0	3	1	39	36	400	9%	86%	81%
Pr. George's	5	24	28	16	8	15	13	109	82	473	17%	80%	82%
Queen Anne's	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	14	7%	0%	0%
Saint Mary's	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	65	3%	50%	100%
Somerset	0	7	4	7	0	5	0	23	17	69	25%	100%	82%
Talbot	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	19	5%	100%	100%
Washington	0	20	1	14	0	8	3	46	38	200	19%	95%	92%
Wicomico	0	10	1	2	0	11	0	24	21	132	16%	100%	95%
Worcester	0	3	0	2	0	4	0	9	9	48	19%	67%	83%
Baltimore City	22	469	317	299	108	102	38	1355	885	2847	31%	79%	74%
Statewide	29	701	481	438	128	199	65	2041	1399	5698	25%	82%	75%

## **THE STATE BOARD**

### **Nettie Anderson-Burrs, Chairperson**

Representing Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties

### **Mae Kastor, Vice-Chairperson**

Representing Baltimore City

### **Deidre Bosley**

Representing Baltimore and Harford Counties

### **Vacant**

Representing Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties

### **Rev. Cameron Carter**

Representing Baltimore City

### **Doretha Henry**

Representing Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties

### **Vacant**

Representing Frederick and Montgomery Counties

### **Patricia Ranney**

Representing Anne Arundel, Carroll, and Howard Counties

### **Sylvia Smith**

Representing Baltimore City

### **James Trent**

Representing Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and Saint Mary's Counties

### **Vacant**

Representing the Governor