



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

December 18, 2020

The Honorable Bill Ferguson, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Co-Chair  
Members of the Legislative Policy Committee

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families respectfully submits the following summary of its 2020 interim activities. The joint committee met three times during the interim to learn about programs that serve children, youth, and families and may be relevant throughout an individual's lifespan.

On September 10, 2020, the joint committee heard presentations related to services for children and families through the Children and Youth Division (CYD) under the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS), Local Management Boards (LMB), local care teams, and youth service bureaus. Each panel provided a brief overview of the programs and activities they administer and, in some cases, how the programs moved to a virtual system or were expanded to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, CYD (formerly the Governor's Office for Children) described how the division administers funds to LMBs and works with other divisions in GOCPYVS on children's issues. CYD also described the effect of transferring the Governor's Office for Children into GOCPYVS. Speakers representing LMBs and youth service bureaus emphasized the need to fund children's services following a 10% reduction to the fiscal 2021 LMB allocation approved by the Board of Public Works (BPW) on July 1, 2020.

The joint committee's meeting on October 8, 2020, covered issues related to long-term care services in the State. AARP presented to the joint committee on the 2020 Long-Term Services and Supports State Scorecard, including the areas where Maryland scored highly and areas where the State should focus to improve its performance. Representatives from the Alzheimer's Association and Lifespan Network discussed new challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused for seniors in long-term care facilities and proposed recommendations for how the State can support this population. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Developmental Disabilities Administration briefed the joint committee on how the agency has provided guidance to community service providers and adapted its programs during the pandemic. The Maryland

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Association of Community Services and Arc Northern Chesapeake Region also updated the joint committee on personnel, operational, and funding challenges throughout the pandemic and offered recommendations for ways that the State could support people with developmental disabilities.

At its November 5, 2020 meeting, the joint committee heard presentations on child care access and affordability. Representatives from the Maryland State Department of Education briefed the joint committee on the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the assistance it has provided and continues to provide to families and child care providers. The presentation included an update on financial assistance provided to families through the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program. The Maryland State Childcare Association, two child care providers, and the Maryland Family Network shared their perspectives on the state of child care, focusing on the effect of the pandemic and how it may affect future child care. The panel discussed the costs and challenges of following COVID-19 guidance, concerns regarding enrollment and staffing during the pandemic, and resources for school-age children who are learning virtually. Maryland Family Network reiterated that enrollment in child care is low because parents are uneasy about sending children for in-person care but noted that a recent study found that child care is relatively lower risk for COVID-19 transmission.

After reviewing the various presentations given during the 2020 interim, the joint committee makes the following recommendations, approved by a majority of its members.

### **Children's Services**

- The State should increase funding or seek alternative funding opportunities for LMBs and youth service bureaus, especially considering the 10% reduction made by BPW to LMB grants in the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund.

### **Long-term Care**

The State should take the following actions to improve and support long-term care services in Maryland:

- develop a COVID-19 testing protocol for residents, staff, and visitors at long-term care facilities and improve active COVID-19 case reporting through the MDH COVID-19 dashboard;
- reject any proposed reduction to the mandated Medicaid and community services provider rate increase;

- support initiatives to expand and strengthen the long-term care workforce, including through online training, by retraining workers in the health care industry who are in need of employment to work in the area of long-term care, and by continuing to work with the Maryland Chamber of Commerce through its Employment Advancement Right Now Program;
- support efforts by long-term care providers to improve visitation and quality of life for residents, especially during the pandemic when steps taken to prevent the spread of the disease may inadvertently lead to isolation; and
- adjust the balance of long-term services and supports toward increased home- and community-based services and improve access to self-direction in the State.

### **Child Care**

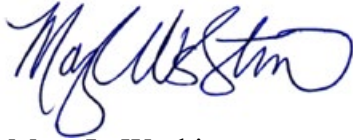
The State should take the following actions to improve and support child care in Maryland:

- continue to increase its investment in child care assistance, such as the CCS Program and the Child and Dependent Tax Credit, and support child care providers, which are important to the State's economy as they continue to operate under and recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- provide access to rapid COVID-19 testing to child care providers and children in care to ensure that potential COVID-19 cases are identified and, in instances where a child or staff member does not have COVID-19, allow a provider to quickly return to providing care;
- expand scholarships for school-age children through the CCS Program or another funding mechanism to assist families in paying for care during the school day while K-12 schools are closed or operating under a hybrid system;
- prioritize support for the child care workforce and acknowledge their role as essential workers; and
- collaborate with child care providers, families, and other stakeholders in determining the State's child care reopening process and actively meet with the Road to Recovery for Maryland's Children Workgroup throughout the State of Emergency.

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The Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families wishes to thank those individuals who contributed their time and expertise to inform and advise the committee's work.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Washington  
Senate Chair



Ariana B. Kelly  
House Chair

MLW:ABK/APW:EMEW/kkh

cc: Members, Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families  
Ms. Victoria L. Gruber  
Mr. Ryan Bishop  
Ms. Alexandra Hughes  
Mr. Jake Weissmann