



State of Maryland Executive Department

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Lieutenant Governor

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**Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Hearing Testimony
Governor's Office for Children
Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund**

**Arlene Lee, Executive Director
of the Governor's Office for Children
and Chair of the Children's Cabinet**

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Honorable Edward Kasemeyer, Chair
February 16, 2016

House Appropriations Committee
Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
February 19, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your Committee as you review the proposed budget for the Governor's Office for Children and the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund.

I would like to thank our Department of Legislative Services Analyst, Jared Sussman, for his thorough analysis.

Department of Legislative Services Recommendations

The Governor's Office for Children should comment on its role in the Governor's Young Readers Program and provide an update on implementation.

Governor Hogan recently announced that every child in Baltimore City, age birth to 5 years, will be eligible to enroll in a free reading and book-delivery program – *The Governor's Young Readers*. The Governor's Office for Children (the Office) has partnered with the Family League of Baltimore City (Family League) to bring country star Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program to Baltimore. Imagination Library is a Tennessee-based nonprofit organization that mails a specifically-selected, age-appropriate book each month to the homes of participating children. The program

currently serves over 750,000 children in 1,600 communities in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Representatives from the Imagination Library organization are working with the Office and the Family League to finalize the enrollment processes including an online enrollment database and training of local partners. The local partners includes the Baltimore City Department of Social Services whose staff will be able to make referrals to the program. Information is available on the program's dedicated website: <http://familyleague.org/governors-young-readers/>.

Enrollment is on track to begin in March 2016 through the Family League and their partners. *The Governor's Young Readers* program is free of charge to eligible families, and will be supported by a grant through the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund. The Office will continue to oversee the implementation of the program, monitor progress, and provide ongoing support.

The Governor's Office for Children should explain how it intends to track services and effectiveness of its programs after the termination of State Children, Youth, and Family Information System.

The State Children, Youth, and Family Information System (SCYFIS) was never capable of providing the desired outcomes information. Even after many attempts and millions of dollars invested in redevelopment, the system proved to be ineffective, costly, and cumbersome for users. The data entered into SCYFIS had been the contractual responsibility of the service providers; a recent quality assurance check of the data in SCYFIS resulted in a determination that approximately 60% of the data in the system was inaccurate and therefore unreliable. Office staff was unable to determine the cause of the problem; various options included user error, user frustration resulting in a lack of appropriate updates, system problems, and lack of timely notice to the database manager of closed programs.

After a determination by the Children's Cabinet and the Department of Information Technology that it would be a waste of scarce resources to invest in further SCYFIS redevelopment, the system was permanently shut-down on July 31, 2015. The Children's Cabinet is working towards the development of a modern technology solution. In the meantime, licensing, contracting, and reporting requirements remain in effect with individual Agencies, which will continue to serve as the basis for a system to monitor outcomes.

Specific to the Office, the shutdown of SCYFIS will not impact the Office's ability to monitor the effectiveness of programs funded by the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund. The Office has used Results-based Accountability (RBA) since the mid-1990s to track outcomes. In FY16, the Office, through the Department of Information Technology, contracted with The Results Leadership Group, LLC for the implementation of the

Results Scorecard™. The Results Leadership Group has automated RBA through the development of the Results Scorecard™, now in use by governments in Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and throughout the United States in both States and Counties - including local jurisdictions in Maryland.

The Results Scorecard™ is a web-based system that will provide greater transparency and accuracy to the monitoring of State funds awarded by the Office to Local Management Boards (Boards). The Scorecard will enable the Office to monitor the performance and outcomes achieved by programs administered by the Boards. The Results Leadership Group will provide licenses, training, and technical assistance to the Boards and Office staff (including webinars and on-site coaching). This will ultimately allow the Office and the Boards to demonstrate the outcomes achieved for Maryland's children and families through the investment of State funds in local jurisdictions. It will also be possible to identify poorly performing programs which will allow resources to be redirected more quickly and efficiently, preventing waste and saving money.

The executive director should provide an update of the status of the Childhood Obesity report.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, childhood obesity is associated with immediate and long-term negative physical and mental health consequences that can put a child at immediate risk for "bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem."¹ Preventing childhood diabetes can stave off negative long-term health effects such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke.

Although the nation-wide rate of childhood obesity has been increasing in recent decades, Maryland has seen a decrease in the prevalence of obesity in children.² Additionally, data from the 2013 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey saw a decline in the percentage of overweight or obese youth (27.4% in 2011 and 25.8% in 2013).³

While these are positive changes, the overall rate of childhood obesity remains high. As a result, State agencies have developed and implemented initiatives that address the issue of childhood obesity and encourage healthier lifestyles through proper nutrition and physical fitness. A workgroup of State agencies and stakeholders has been established and is currently reviewing the initiatives in place to educate children and youth on healthy eating. The goal is to identify further actions that State agencies can take to reduce child obesity and teen diabetes. The workgroup is on track to complete

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/obesity/facts.htm>

² Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Vital Signs: Obesity Among Low-Income, Preschool-Aged Children — United States, 2008–2011, August 9, 2013 / 62(31);629-634

³ 2013 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The percentage is calculated using the self-reported height and weight of middle and high school students responding to the 2013 Survey. <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/OIDPCS/CSTIP/CSTIPDocuments/MD-YRBS-Report.pdf>

the report by the May 2, 2016 deadline, as outlined in the work plan submitted in December 2015.

Department of Legislative Services recommends adopting committee narrative requesting the Governor's Office for Children (Office) and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Department) provide a report that details the previous services offered at the Office and the Department and the structure of the Care Management Entity program after the transfer. The report should include detail of the services offered and the number of children, both Medicaid eligible and non-Medicaid eligible, that were served in fiscal 2015 and 2016 as well as an estimate for fiscal 2017.

The Governor's Office for Children concurs with this recommendation.

Department of Legislative Services recommends adopting committee narrative requesting the Governor's Office for Children (Office) to produce a report on out-of-home placements.

The Governor's Office for Children concurs with this recommendation.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify regarding the Governor's Office for Children and the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund Fiscal Year 2017 budget.