

**The Maryland Department of Health's
Responses to the DLS FY 2019 Public Health Services Budget Analysis
February 21, 2018 (House) and February 22, 2018 (Senate)**

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends restricting these funds pending review of the project by DoIT and a determination of whether the project should be subject to inclusion in the MITDP program. (pg. 4, 16)

While the Vital Statistics Administration (VSA) agrees that this project is being undertaken to support a critical business function for the citizens of Maryland, the Department respectfully disagrees that the total cost of replacing the birth registration system will exceed the DoIT threshold of \$1 million. The VSA has been working with the Department's Office of Information Technology to evaluate possible solutions for implementation of an integrated electronic vital records registration system (EVRS). This evaluation included a Request for Information that was extended to all major commercial-off-the-shelf vendors of EVR systems as well as a survey of other states regarding their experiences in developing their EVRS. Site visits next month will conclude the evaluation of the two systems that have been determined to meet Maryland's EVRS requirements that can be implemented in a cost-effective way and also meet the extremely tight timeframe for implementation that is required due to the current aging birth registration system, which can no longer be maintained.

The Department expects that at least one of the remaining two solutions will be able to be implemented within 12-18 months for approximately \$500,000 based on a recent implementation of the electronic death registration system that was accomplished in 12 months for \$189,000. This effort was possible because the software team responsible for customizing the system for Maryland were subject-matter experts.

The Department is concerned that a review by DoIT will unnecessarily and seriously delay this project, especially when a final decision and implementation is imminent. Selection of an optimal solution in this instance has less to do with the underlying technology and much more to do with ensuring that the solution meets Maryland's processes for the registration, amendment, and issuance of vital records.

DLS recommends amending provisions of the BRFA of 2018 to clarify statute related to funding for Core Public Health Services. (pg. 4, 25)

The recommendation has two parts: The first to clarify how population growth is calculated for the Core funding formula, and the second to clarify the base funding amount to be used for the Core funding formula. The Department respectfully disagrees with the first part and concurs with the second.

- **Population Growth:** Since at least FY 2009 the Core funding formula has been using Maryland population data from the Maryland Department of Planning or the Department's Vital Statistics Administration, both of which do not publish population data that is more current than what is already included in the Core funding formula at the time of budget development. The Core funding formula for FY 2019 calculates the

growth in population data from July 1, 2015 and July 1, 2016 because the Vital Statistics Administration will not publish July 1, 2017 population data until well after the 2018 Session adjourns. Unless DLS proposes an alternative source for population data, the recommended language would not change how the Core funding formula is calculated.

- **Base Funding Amount:** The Department concurs with the recommendation.