

STATEMENT OF LOURDES R. PADILLA
SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
BEFORE THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE
FY 2020 BUDGET

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019



Good afternoon, Chairman Reznik, Vice Chair Valentino Smith and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. With me today are Deputy Secretary of Programs, Randi Walters; Executive Director of the Social Services Administration, Rebecca Jones Gaston; and our Chief Financial Officer, Stafford Chipungu.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) believes that children, youth and vulnerable adults do better in strong families, and that families do better in supportive communities. DHS's Social Services Administration (SSA) works to help families stay safe, stable and healthy so that our children, youth and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and neglect. Safety and well-being are at the center of our child welfare and adult services. The scope of our services includes family preservation, foster care and adoption, as well as adult protective services. We also provide supportive services to prevent more restrictive and costly institutional placements.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Governor's Allowance for SSA totals \$576 million, representing a 1% increase from the FY 2019 Appropriation. This increase is substantially due to the increase in rates set by the Interagency Rates Committee.

Foster Care Placement Trends

DHS remains committed to achieving positive outcomes for children and families by providing services that keep children safely at home and assist families in meeting their needs. Since 2007, over 30,000 children have exited foster care and safely returned home, moved to guardianship, or been adopted. The number of Maryland children in foster care has been more than cut in half since July 2007. The proportion of foster children exiting foster care to permanency through reunification, adoption, and guardianship has increased from 66% in FY 2008 to 83% in FY 2018,

and the placement of children in group settings has decreased from nearly 20% in 2007 to 10% in 2018.

During the past year, DHS has seen a slight increase in entries into foster care of approximately 2.9% from FY17 to FY18. The total number of children in foster care remains below those of FY15, when there was a total of 4,837 youth in out-of-home placements. Currently (as of December 31, 2018), there are 4,703 children in out-of-home placements. Among those, there are 3,424 youth in foster care placed in a family setting, and 505 youth placed in group home settings. SSA projects to maintain and reduce the number of children in foster care while maintaining safety as a priority, with an increased focus on supportive services across the state.

The utilization of out-of-state placement providers has decreased significantly since 2016. As of January 2019, there were 18 youth placed outside of Maryland. In collaboration with sister agencies, more than 75 children have been diverted from out-of-state placements and 67 have been returned to Maryland.

In FY18 and FY19, DHS has increased the board and care rate issued to both public and private providers by 3%. The increase was also applied to the Differential Board Rate which was established in certain jurisdictions (e.g. Prince George's and Charles Counties) because the District of Columbia pays higher board rates for foster children than Maryland. Resource providers partner with the Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) to provide appropriate care for children in need of safe, stable homes and supportive services. This increase to public and private providers

allows for additional recruiting of foster families for children and for specific local departments to remain competitive with bordering jurisdictions like the District of Columbia.

Older Youth Initiatives

The **Foster Youth Savings Program** (FYSP) supplements existing support services to provide older youth in foster care with the financial resources and capability to successfully transition out of foster care. In FY18, DHS opened savings accounts for more than 1,900 youth ages 14-20. During FY19, approximately 700 new accounts were opened for youth entering into foster care or turning 14 while in care. In addition, approximately 1,700 youth received an annual deposit into their existing account. An incentive of \$500 was also added to the program during FY19 for those completing a high school diploma, GED or equivalent certificate. It is anticipated that approximately 330 youth will be eligible to receive this incentive.

The **Ready By 21** (RB21) initiative continues to coordinate efforts to work with youth to achieve benchmarks in support of becoming successful adults. Ready By 21's coordinated efforts aim to ensure that youth have occupational and/or educational opportunities, stable housing, access to health care, financial stability, and a permanent mentorship connection with an adult. DHS is currently working with the State Youth Advisory Board on updating some of the existing benchmarks. DHS will also co-host two Youth Shadow Days again this year in collaboration with Delegate C.T. Wilson.

DHS continues to strive toward ensuring that all youth who leave foster care are independent and successful adults. The **Maryland Tuition Waiver** is one mechanism utilized to assist our youth with achieving success. Each year, DHS has worked to increase the number of youth who take

advantage of the Maryland Tuition Waiver. Between the academic years of 2015-16 and 2016-17, there was a dramatic 94% increase in the utilization of the waiver.

Family Preservation and In-home Services

SSA has focused its efforts on preventing children from entering out-of-home care. In order to achieve this goal, there has been a strong emphasis on family preservation services and in-home services. In FY18, 16,286 children from 7,710 families received family preservation and in-home services. These services are critical to reducing the incidents of maltreatment experienced in family homes. From FY10 through FY17, an average of 96% of children receiving family preservation services have been able to remain with their families, thereby avoiding out-of-home placement, and almost 98% have remained in their family homes in the 12 months following the closure of the family preservation case.

Alternative Response

One of the strategies that SSA adopted in 2014 is the use of Alternative Response (AR). In cases where the risk of maltreatment is determined to be low, AR allows caseworkers to focus on providing services to the family to mitigate any risks and allows the family to stay intact. Approximately 40% of Maryland CPS reports are serviced on the AR track. The recidivism rate for AR families is low. Approximately 95% of families serviced on the AR track do not have a subsequent maltreatment incident within 12 months of service. This is an increase from FY17 (93%) to FY18 (95%).

Adoption, Guardianship and Reunification Trends

In FY18, 2,044 children achieved permanency, which represents 83% of the total exits from foster care. Specifically, 1,257 children were reunified with their families, 421 went to a permanent

guardianship home, and 366 children were adopted. The FY18 exit to permanency rate (83%) represents an increase compared to the rate of 75% in FY15. In the first four months of the current fiscal year, there have been 667 total permanent exits from foster care, which we project will represent an increase in exits to permanency from previous fiscal years.

Adoptions increased 14% from FY17 (320) to FY18 (366). The goal for Adoption Services is to develop permanent families for children who cannot live with or safely be reunited with their birth parents. Maryland's Adoption Services continues to assist LDSS and other partnering adoption agencies in finding adoptive families for children, especially older youth, in the care and custody of the State.

Guardianships decreased by 11% from FY17 (472) to FY18 (421). Local Departments are working to extend resources to relative caregivers to ensure that youth maintain a stable environment and lasting connections. SSA plans to continue to promote the Adoptions and Guardianship Incentive Funding to provide more services and promote stability and permanency.

Substance Use Challenges

In collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, DHS has implemented evidence-based practice interventions to support families impacted by substance use. In 2018, Maryland amended existing law to come into compliance with the Federal Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016, as it amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The passage of the new law allows DHS to address the effects of substance use disorders on newborns, children and families, and their needs. In addition to implementation of the new law, the Department has implemented a family mentor intervention model. There are currently 13 LDSS's implementing

the family mentor intervention of Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START). This intervention pairs a peer mentor on his or her own recovery journey with a parent(s) involved with Child Protective Services.

Families Blossom (Maryland Title IV-E Waiver)

Families Blossom, Maryland's Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project, is specifically focused on reducing the need for foster care and promoting timely and lasting permanency. Families Blossom has been building on the foundations established by Place Matters to create a trauma-responsive system of care, enhance the current array of services to increase utilization of evidence-based practices, enhance parental substance abuse services, strengthen partnerships and collaborations with providers and community stakeholders, and enhance our continuous quality improvement processes, with the goal of strengthening families so that children are safe, healthy, and able to grow and thrive. Since July 2015, DHS/SSA and LDSS have undertaken a number of initiatives in the following areas:

1. Allocated over \$5 million to local departments to provide an array of direct services and supports to children and families.
2. Expanded the use of evidence-based practices in existing services, particularly in the areas of substance use and behavioral health.
3. Implemented workforce training initiatives to support the development of a safe, engaged, well-prepared, and professional workforce, particularly in the subjects of serving substance exposed newborns and their families, as well as serving the LGBTQ population.
4. Supported the development of a trauma responsive system of care through the implementation of two consultation series to assist local departments in changing their

practices, local policies, and environments to respond to staff trauma, promote staff wellness and resiliency, and effectively infuse trauma responsive care into daily practice.

5. Began a process to identify, recruit, and train a diverse cohort of biological/birth caregivers and family members of youth involved with Maryland's child welfare system to be authentic and meaningful partners in systems and policy design.

Additionally, plans are in place to fund a variety of activities to support identified priorities and promote positive outcomes for children and families. These activities include:

- Services and supports for children with the highest level of need;
- Materials and tools to support enhancements to Maryland's integrated practice model; and
- Partnerships with stakeholders and providers to make recommendations and develop strategies to sustain interventions beyond the Waiver period.

Families Blossom 🌸 Place Matters is the name of our strategic framework for change as we move forward. It includes coordinated, comprehensive elements now being implemented:

- An expanded array of effective home- and community-based services designed to prevent maltreatment and unnecessary out-of-home placements;
- Investments in our workforce through training and development, including supervision and coaching, along with information technology (IT) modernization;
- Improved, streamlined policies and procedures consistent with our new Integrated Practice Model; and
- Enhanced continuous quality improvement processes.

SSA has developed an approach for consistent, high quality social work practice, which we are calling our Integrated Practice Model. Our guiding principles include a commitment to delivering the best possible services and interventions for our families, and to achieving outcomes of safety, stability and well-being.

These principles are: family-centered, trauma-responsive, individualized and strength-based, culturally and linguistically competent, outcome-driven, community-focused, and a trained and professional workforce.

New Federal Legislation – Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018 is landmark legislation that provides a pathway to further transform our child welfare system to one that seeks first to prevent abuse and neglect and the resulting entry into foster care through the use of evidence-based interventions, rather than a system that deploys foster care as a primary service. This legislation will link policies, systems and programs together to simultaneously serve parents and children consistent with the State’s implementation of 2Gen.

For several years, Maryland has demonstrated sustained momentum in child welfare transformation. As a result, DHS is prepared to leverage FFPSA to further our strategic vision of preventing child abuse and neglect, reducing entry into foster care, and restricting youth placements in institutional settings. DHS plans to transition to FFPSA on October 1, 2019. With the transition, the Department will continue to collaborate with other Maryland agencies and organizations to ensure that families are at the center of service delivery.

Inter-Agency Rates Committee (IRC) and Provider Rate Setting Workgroup and Reform

DHS and a subgroup of Inter-Agency Rates Committee members consisting of representatives from the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Juvenile Services, Governor's Office for Children, Maryland Department of Health, and Maryland State Department of Education have been meeting monthly to ensure forward movement on the implementation of Maryland's rates reform. In July 2018, the group identified two consultants (The Institute for Innovation & Implementation at the University of Maryland School of Social Work and The Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland Baltimore County) to work through the mechanics of restructuring rates, services and processes, including needed regulatory changes.

The current work is called the Children's Quality Service Reform Initiative (QSRI). The vision for QSRI is for Maryland's child and family servicing agencies to have access to an array of services that reflect the State's priorities to best support children, youth and families in their homes and communities. Maryland will have the necessary infrastructure to purchase quality and effective services with supports to meet the individual needs of children and families, while appropriately leveraging federal funding. Rates for services will align with the quality and level of clinical care being provided and will be based on consistent "level of class" descriptions, facilitating the State's ability to pursue appropriate Medicaid matches and align with the requirements of the 2018 Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).

With the assistance of the consultants, DHS and the IRC expect to have the full implementation of rates reform in place by July 1, 2020 (FY21).

Adult Services

SSA's Office of Adult Services provides technical assistance, training and direction to local Adult Services staff, which provided services and support to more than 25,000 vulnerable adults during FY18. The piloting phase of the Adult Protective Services (APS) Assessment Instrument (funded through a federal grant) involved 7 LDSS over a 3-month period, resulting in 460 completed assessments. This project is currently in the statewide training phase during January and February and will be implemented statewide in March 2019.

Child Juvenile Adult Management System (CJAMS)

Over the last year, SSA has been involved in the development of the Child Juvenile Adult Management System (CJAMS). CJAMS is an application being developed as part of the MD THINK system that will support DHS and DJS employees as they provide child welfare, juvenile, and adult services to children and families facing a crisis. It will also support the Office of Licensing and Monitoring.

SSA has engaged a variety of stakeholders in the development to ensure that this new system is family-centric and user-friendly. Currently, SSA (in coordination with LDSS) is completing development and conducting user testing of the system in order to identify refinements and increase functionality. SSA plans to launch a pilot of CJAMS in May 2019 with a full roll out of the system by October 2019.

Hotline

DHS is actively preparing to implement a single hotline for the reporting of child maltreatment. The initial steps are underway with the upgrading of phone systems at local departments of social

services. Based on research and lessons learned from other states, the roll out of a new single hotline will include a communication campaign to inform the public of the number. The anticipated full implementation of the new number and go-live date is July 1, 2020.

Conclusion

SSA strives to strengthen practice, support our hardworking workforce, and look for innovative ways to engage with our partners and communities to improve the lives of our most vulnerable Marylanders. We are committed to community-based, collaborative programs that support vulnerable adults and families, engage youth, build on their strengths, and respond to trauma so that all Marylanders are:

- Safe and free from maltreatment;
- Able to access a full array of high-quality services to meet their needs;
- Living in safe, supportive and stable families where they can grow and thrive;
- Partnered with a well-trained, competent, high-quality, and supportive workforce that collaborates with families to achieve positive results; and
- Healthy and resilient with stable, lasting connections.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Department of Human Resources
FY 2020 Budget Highlights
Social Services Administration
NB00.04**

	<u>FY 2019 Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 2020 Allowance</u>	<u>Changes</u>
I. FUNDING^a			
General Funds	12,030,384	11,444,539	(585,845)
Special Funds	-	-	-
Federal Funds	15,896,100	15,318,071	(578,029)
Reim. Funds	-	-	-
Total	27,926,484	26,762,610	(1,163,874)
II. PERSONNEL^a			
Regular Positions:	113.00	116.00	3.00
Contractual Positions:	2.00	2.00	0.00
III. MAJOR CHANGES (In Thousands)			
01 <u>Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits</u>			
Decrease in Salaries due to Regular Salaries, (\$125K); Workers' Compensation, (\$25K); Social Security Contributions (\$9K); Turnover Expectancy, (\$5K); Offset by Increase in Health Insurance, \$102K; and Employees' Retirement, \$46K.			(16)
02 <u>Technical & Special Fees</u>			
Increase in Technical & Special Fees due to Staff Development, \$3K.			3
03 <u>Communications</u>			
Decrease in Communications mainly due to DBM Paid Telecommunications, (\$24K).			(24)
04 <u>Travel</u>			
Increase in Travel due to Out-of-State Routine Travel for foster care site visits, \$35K; In-State Routine Travel, \$3K; and Volunteer Meals, \$1K.			39
07 <u>Vehicles</u>			
Increase in Vehicles due to Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs, \$2K; and Gas & Oil, \$2K.			4
08 <u>Contractual Services</u>			
Decrease in Contractual Services due to IV-E Waiver, (\$1,194K); Case Service Coordination, (\$54K); Purchased Services, (\$2K); Offset by Increase in Rate Reform Interagency Agreement, \$420K; Administrative Hearing, \$258K; Family Preservation Services, \$11K; and Adoption Services, \$2K.			(559)
12 <u>Grants, Subsidies and Contributions</u>			
Decrease in Grants due to IV-E Waiver, (\$879K); Offset by Increase for Maryland Resource Parent Association, \$158K; and Baltimore Child Abuse Center, \$100K.			(621)
13 <u>Fixed Charges</u>			
Increase in Fixed Charges due to Foster Care Liability Insurance, \$10K.			10
Total			(1,164)

^aReference Source: FY 2020 Maryland State Budget Book - Part II: Page 240

**Department of Human Resources
 FY 2020 Budget Highlights
 Foster Care Maintenance Payments
 NG00.01**

	<u>FY 2019 Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 2020 Allowance</u>	<u>Changes</u>
I. FUNDING^a			
General Funds	188,172,690	191,228,009	3,055,319
Special Funds	4,314,193	4,253,124	(61,069)
Federal Funds	68,789,450	74,580,195	5,790,745
Reim. Funds	0	0	0
Total	261,276,333	270,061,328	8,784,995

II. PERSONNEL^a			
Regular Positions:	N/A	N/A	N/A
Contractual Positions:	N/A	N/A	N/A

III. MAJOR CHANGES (In Thousands)

Increase in foster care maintenance payments for Provider Rate Increases and caseloads in Regular Foster Care.	9
Total	9

^aReference Source: FY 2019 Maryland State Budget Book - Part 11: Page 249.

**Department of Human Services
FY 2020 Budget Highlights
Local Child Welfare Services (CWS)
NG00.03**

	<u>FY 2019 Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 2020 Allowance</u>	<u>Changes</u>
I. FUNDING			
General Funds	160,742,375	149,943,936	(10,798,439)
Special Funds	1,811,321	1,853,996	42,675
Federal Funds	71,257,444	81,072,615	9,815,171
Reim. Funds	206,024	206,024	-
Total	234,017,164	233,076,571	(940,593)
II. PERSONNEL			
Regular Positions:	2,115.20	2,112.20	(3.00)
Contractual Positions:	0.50	0.50	0.00
III. MAJOR CHANGES (In Thousands)			
01 <u>Salaries</u>			3,786
Increase in Salaries due to Fringe Benefits, \$1,320K; Health Insurance, \$1,098K; Retirees Health Insurance Premiums, \$859K; and Regular Earnings, \$609K; Offset by Decrease in Turnover Expectancy, (\$100K).			
02 <u>Technical & Special Fees</u>			89
Increase in Technical and Special Fees due to Therapeutic and Legal Services contracts in Baltimore County and Private Processors contract in Baltimore City, \$59K; and Interpreter Fees mainly in Anne Arundel County, 30K.			
03 <u>Communications</u>			31
Increase in Communications due to Telephone/Telegraph, \$99K; Cell Phones, \$30K; Offset by Decrease in DBM Paid Telecommunications, (\$59K); and Postage, (\$39K).			
04 <u>Travel</u>			70
Increase in Travel due to In-State Travel-Business mainly in St. Mary's and Allegany Counties, \$70K.			
06 <u>Utilities</u>			3
Increase in Utilities due to Electricity Usage mainly in Baltimore City, \$3K.			
07 <u>Vehicles</u>			34
Increase in Vehicles due to Gas and Oil, \$39K; Offset by Decrease in Motor Vehicle Replacement, (\$4K); and Maintenance and Repair, (\$1K).			
08 <u>Contractual Services</u>			(7)
Decrease in Contractual Services due to Other Contractual Services mainly for Security Guards, (\$15K); Janitorial Services mainly in Baltimore City, (\$14K); and Medical Exams in Baltimore County, (\$9K); Offset by Increase in Attorney Fees mainly in Harford and Cecil Counties, \$31K.			
09 <u>Supplies</u>			(5)
Decrease in Supplies due to Office Supplies, (\$6K); Housekeeping, (\$3K); Copier Services, (\$1K); and Data Processing Supplies, (\$1K); Offset by Increase in Other Supplies and Materials, \$6K.			
12 <u>Grants, Subsidies and Contributions</u>			(4,975)
Decrease in Grants, Subsidies and Contributions mainly due to IV-E Waiver Grant, (\$6,000K); Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Grant, (\$167K); and Background Checks, (\$8K); Offset by Increase in Grants for the Governor's Office for Children Local Care Team Coordinators, \$1,200K.			
13 <u>Fixed Charges</u>			33
Increase in Fixed Charges due to Rental - Multi Service Centers, \$23K; Rent Paid to Department of General Services, \$7K; Subscriptions and Dues, \$2K; and Other Fixed Charges, \$1K.			
Total			(941)

^a Reference Source: FY 2020 Maryland State Budget Book - Part II: Pages: 252-253.

Department of Human Resources
FY 2020 Budget Highlights
Local Adult Services
NG00.04

	FY 2019	FY 2020	Changes
	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Request</u>	
I. FUNDING^a			
General Funds	11,470,554	11,642,119	171,565
Special Funds	1,231,540	687,672	(543,868)
Federal Funds	32,892,888	33,833,516	940,628
Reim. Funds	-	-	-
Total	<u>45,594,982</u>	<u>46,163,307</u>	<u>568,325</u>
II. PERSONNEL^a			
Regular Positions:	424.25	426.25	2.00
Contractual Positions:	0.00	0.00	0.00
III. MAJOR CHANGES (In Thousands)			
01 <u>Salaries</u>			888
Increase in Health Insurance \$396K; Fringe Benefits, 286K; and Salaries due to Regular Earnings \$225K; and Offset by Decrease in and Turnover Expectancy, (\$19).			
02 <u>Technical & Special Fees</u>			3
Increase in Technical and Special Fees due to Interpreter Fees in Prince George's County, \$3K.			
03 <u>Communications</u>			26
Increase in Communications due to Cell Phone, \$20; Telephone/Telegraph, \$18K, and Postage,\$4K. Offset by Decrease in DBM Paid Telecommunications, (\$16K).			
04 <u>Travel</u>			10
Increase in Travel due to In-State Routine Operations mainly in Allegany, \$5K; Princes George's, \$4K; and Howard Counties, \$1K.			
06 <u>Utilities</u>			(5)
Decrease in Utilities due to Electricity Usage in Baltimore County, (\$6K); Offset by Increase in Prince George's County, \$1K.			
08 <u>Contractual Services</u>			(439)
Decrease in Contractual Services due to Purchase of Service-Client Services for Adult Protective Services cases, (\$574K); Senior Care Emergency Response System, (\$12K); and Rental-Copy Machines, (\$6K); Offset by Increase in Contractual Services mainly in Baltimore City, 115K; Senior Care Med Equip Supplies, \$16K; Senior Care Personal Care, \$12K; Senior Care Chore Services, \$6K; Senior Care Adult Day Care, \$2K; and Senior Care Respite Care, \$2K.			
09 <u>Supplies</u>			(3)
Decrease in Supplies due to Printed Forms, (\$2K); Data Processing Supplies, (\$2K); Other Supplies and Materials, (\$2K); Offset by Increase in Offices Supplies, \$3K.			
12 <u>Grants, Subsidies & Contributions</u>			83
Increase in Grants Subsidies and Contributions mainly due to Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Grant, \$80K and Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS, (HOPWA), 7K; and Grants for Subsidized Rent in (HOPWA),and PG Local Only-Adult; 13K; Offset by Decrease in Taxable Grant for (HOPWA), (\$11K); Grants in PG Local Only-Adult, (\$4K); and Background Checks in Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties; \$(2K).			
13 <u>Fixed Charges</u>			5
Increase in Fixed Charges due to Rental - Multi Services Centers, \$4K; and Non-Department of General Services, (DGS) Rent; \$1K.			
Total			568

^a Reference Source: FY 2020 Maryland State Budget Book - Part II: Page: 254

**Department of Human Services
Social Services Administration
N00B**

Response to Issues

Issue #1: DHS Fails to Submit a Report on Hospital Stays by Youth in Out-of-home Placements. (Page 3)

Response to Issue

The Department concurs with the Analyst's observation. DHS understands that the report is past due and shall submit the report by Friday, February 15, 2019. Due to the complexity of differing reporting mechanisms the Department is in the final stages of report review with the Department of Health.

Issue #2: DHS should discuss how it plans to cover any fiscal 2019 shortfall. (Page 21)

Response to Issue

The Department and DBM continue to monitor caseloads. DBM is aware of the Department's resources. The Department is working in consultation with DBM to ensure funding is aligned during closeout to cover expenditures throughout all programs.

Issue #3 DLS recommends that the department provide a copy of the report describing the new rate structure to the budget committees. (Page 21)

Response to Issue

The Department concurs with the Analyst's recommendation to provide a report related to the rates reform initiative also known as the Children's Quality Services Reform Initiative (QSRI). The report will be provided to the committees once completed. The anticipated timeframe for completion is December 2019.

Issue #4: DHS should discuss why it did not include funding for these purposes, particularly given that several practices receiving initial consideration are currently being implemented by jurisdictions. (Page 25)

Response to Issue

The Department did not include funding because there are outstanding issues that must be addressed before funding can be determined. There are currently ten (10) of thirty-nine (39) contracted providers that are either accredited or have indicated that they will be pursuing the accreditation process. Additionally, DHS has submitted for federal approval of the accreditation body that is used by the Developmental Disabilities Administration for their providers. DHS, the Inter-Agency Rates Committee Agencies, the University of Maryland and the courts are working to develop the infrastructure necessary to support the QRTP rules and provisions of the FFPSA.

Issue #5: DHS should comment on whether it anticipates requesting a delay for the new QRTP rules and its readiness to implement these and other provisions of the FFPSA. (Page 25)

Response to Issue

DHS does not anticipate a need to delay. DHS has been working with DJS, the Provider community and the Courts to develop the infrastructure necessary to support the QRTP rules and provisions of the FFPSA. DHS is also working with the University of Maryland, Casey Family Programs and Chapin Hall to prepare and engage stakeholders in the planning.

Issue #6: DHS should comment on how it will accommodate the additional general fund spending necessary to match the additional waiver spending. (Page 28)

Response to Issue

The Department has sufficient general fund appropriation to match the additional waiver spending. The Department will align funding within the budget during the Fiscal Year 2019 closing process.

Issue #7: DLS recommends language restricting funds until DHS submits a report detailing plans for continuing or expanding evidence-based practices from the Title IV-E Waiver after the end of the waiver, including whether the practices have been determined to be eligible for Title IV-E funding as a result of the FFPSA. (Page 28)

Response to Issue

The Department concurs with the Analyst's recommendation, but disagrees with the restriction of funds to provide the requested report related continuing or expanding evidenced based practices after the end of the Title IV-E waiver.

The Department is currently working on sustainability assessments for each of the evidence based practices currently being implemented with the Title-IV-E Waiver. This assessment outlines the utilization, outcomes, costs, and implementation lessons learned for each evidence based practice implemented. The Department continues to track the Children's Bureau's development of the Clearinghouse and acceptances of those evidence based practices that will be approved under FFPSA. Once full guidance is provided on which practices are eligible under FFPSA, the Department will utilize this information along with the sustainability assessments to develop a plan for continuing or expanding evidence based practices. Anticipated timeline for completion is September 2019.

Issue #8: DLS recommends restricting the funds for the program until the department reports on the planned uses of the fiscal 2020 funding, including financial incentives to be offered and estimates for the number of youth that will receive each incentive. (Page 30 and 31)

Response to Issue

The Department concurs with the Analyst's recommendation, but disagrees with the restriction of funds to provide the requested report related to plans to utilize the funding for FY 2020. The

plan will include financial incentives and the estimated number of youth that will receive the cash incentive.

The SSA Emerging Adults Workgroup and the State Youth Advisory Board are currently updating the Ready by 21 Benchmarks and Youth Transition Plan. The updated benchmarks and activities will be aligned with specific financial incentives in addition to the annual savings deposits that will be tracked through the new CJAMS tool being implemented this calendar year 2019.

Issue #9: DHS should comment on whether it plans to track outcomes after youth exit care to determine whether the savings accounts are easing the financial transition to out of care. (Page 31)

Response to Issue

DHS is exploring additional mechanisms to best research outcomes for youth exiting care, including the impact of the foster youth saving accounts, tuition waiver and apprenticeship programs.

Issue #10: As a result, DLS recommends the release of the withheld funds, and a letter to this effect will be sent if no objections are raised by the subcommittees. However, the department should comment on efforts to work with MDH to improve tracking of outcomes of youth following a VPA request. (Page 34)

Response to Issue

The Department tracks information on youth placed through Voluntary Placement Agreements (VPA) including approvals, denials, placement types and to where youth are discharged. The Department is also working with the Maryland Department of Health and the in-state RTC's to better coordinate both agency's data.

Issue #11: DHS should explain when it last reallocated positions to a jurisdiction(s) to reduce or eliminate caseworker shortfall according to CWLA standards. (Page 35)

Response to Issue

The Department examines caseload information based on CWLA standards on a monthly basis and allocates positions when necessary based on caseload analysis and need within jurisdictions for both child welfare and adult services. Additionally, local departments make specific requests that are also analyzed and determined if reclassifications or allocations are needed. During 2018, DHS reallocated multiple positions to more than five jurisdictions.

Issue #12: DHS should comment on any plans to reclassify positions to create additional supervisor positions or any other actions planned to ensure that all jurisdictions can meet the CWLA supervisor-to-case ratio. (Page 38)

Response to Issue

The Department of Human Services is proactive in the management of human capital to ensure that the CWLA supervisor to case ratios are met. We also apply the same proactive approach to

ensuring that caseload carrying positions are also being maintained within the CWLA guidelines. When necessary, SSA redeploys positions to meet needs. When the SSA caseload analysis indicates that caseload carrying positions should be redeployed at the supervisor level, the Department follows the process established by the Department of Budget & Management (DBM) to reclassify the position.

Additionally, DHS has formed a Recruitment and Retention workgroup with local department leadership and HRDT to identify additional strategies to attract a skilled workforce and then to keep them within the department.

Issue #13: DLS recommends committee narrative requesting DHS continue the annual reporting of caseload data compared to CWLA standards as well as providing information on the specific plans of SSA to address shortfalls in caseworkers and supervisors and any efforts to update the caseload standards by CWLA (Page 38)

Response to Issue

The Department concurs with the Analyst's recommendation to provide the requested information on caseload to caseworker ratios compared to CWLA standards as well as information on the specific plans of SSA to address shortfalls in caseworkers and supervisors and any efforts to update the caseload standards by CWLA.

Issue #14: DLS recommends budget language again withholding funds until this report is submitted. (Page 39)

Response to Issue

The Department concurs with the Analyst's observation. The Department is in the final stages of review for this report with the Department of Health due to the complexity of differing reporting mechanisms. DHS understands that the report is past due and shall submit the report by Friday, February 15, 2019.

**Department of Human Services
Social Services Administration
N00B**

Response to Recommended Actions

Recommendation #1

Add language restricting funds until a report is submitted on plans for continuing evidence-based practices at the end of the Title IV-E Waiver. **(Page 3 and 40)**

Response:

The Department concurs with Analyst's recommendation to submit plans for continuing evidence-based practice by December 1, 2019, but disagrees with the restriction of the funding.

Recommendation #2

Add language restricting funds until a report is submitted on hospital stays by youth in out-of-home placements. **(Page 3 and 41)**

Response:

The Department concurs with Analyst's recommendation to submit a report on hospital stays by youth in out-of-home placement by September 1, 2019 but disagrees with the restriction of the funding.

Recommendation #3

Adopt committee narrative requesting a copy of a report on the planned new foster care rate structure. **(Page 3 and 42)**

Response:

The Department concurs with Analyst's recommendation to submit a copy of a report on the planned new foster care rate structure with the submission of the fiscal 2021 budget.

Recommendation #4

Add language to restrict the Foster Care Maintenance Payments program to that purpose. **(Page 3 and 42)**

Response:

The Department will comply with the budget bill language as recommended.

Recommendation #5

Add language to restrict the funding for the Foster Youth Savings Program until the department provides information on the planned use of funds. **(Page 3, 42 and 43)**

Response:

The Department concurs with the Analyst's recommendation but disagrees with the restriction of the funding. The Department is willing to provide a report detailing future plans for operating the Foster Youth Savings Program. However, the Department disagrees with restricting the funds due to the delay it may cause in implementing this much needed initiative. These funds are earmarked for youth in our care and are used to prepare our youth that are leaving our care. This restriction is counter-productive and limits the effectiveness of the program.

Recommendation #6

Add language to restrict funding for the Child Welfare Services program to that purpose.
(Page 3 and 43)

Response:

The Department will comply with the budget bill language as recommended.

Recommendation #7

Add committee narrative requesting information on child welfare caseloads and caseworkers.
(Page 3, 43 and 44)

Response:

The Department concurs with the Analyst's recommendation to provide the requested information on child welfare caseloads and caseworkers.