



Exclusive Media Briefing: 2021 Legislative Agenda

Eliminate Disparities to Protect
Maryland Children's Potential

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

ADVOCATES
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Birth To Three Strategic Initiative: Expand Access to Telehealth

Barriers to accessing physical & behavioral health services

- Time
- Transportation
- Childcare

Prior to the pandemic Maryland Medicaid's allowances for telehealth visits quite restrictive

Significant expansions in response to the pandemic

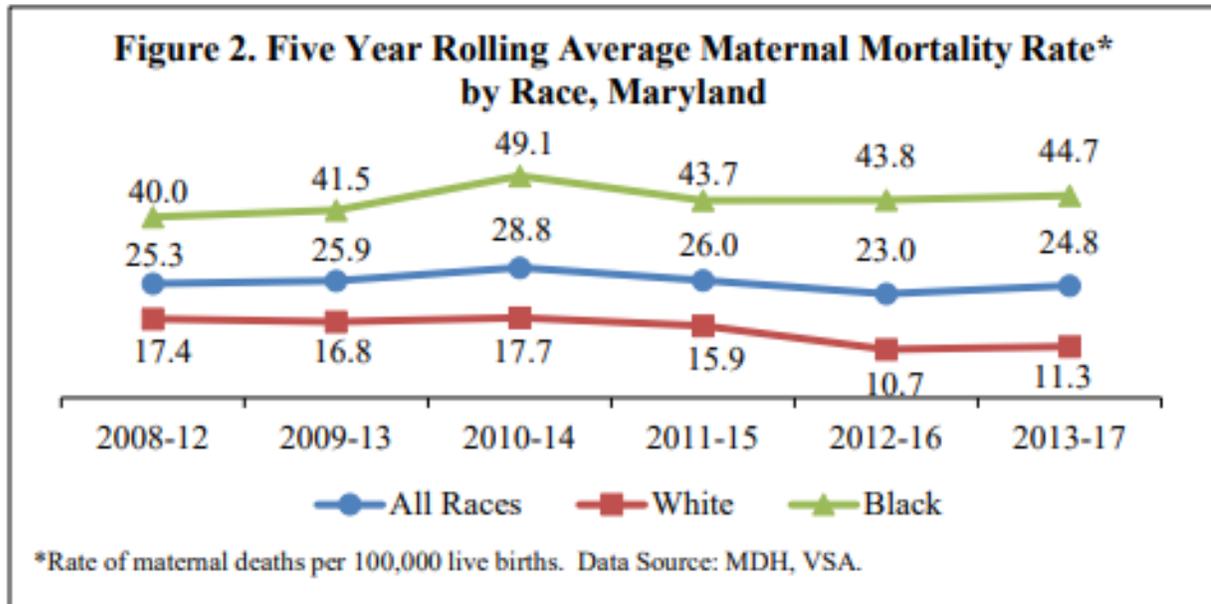
- Fewer missed appointments
- Eliminates transportation barriers
- Decreases time commitment

2021 Legislation

- Allow telehealth for physical & behavioral health appointments
 - When clinically appropriate
 - When the patient prefers the telehealth option

Birth To Three Strategic Initiative

- Implicit bias training for medical providers that treat BIPOC pregnant individuals to reduce racial disparities in birth outcomes.



Maryland's most recent Maternal Mortality Review Program reports that: "In the U.S., Black women have an MMR 2.4 times greater than White women, a disparity that has persisted since the 1940s. **In Maryland, there is also a large disparity between the rates among Black and White women.** Figure 2 shows the MMR by race in Maryland for six overlapping five-year periods over the past decade. Compared to 2008-2012, the 2013-2017 **White MMR in Maryland decreased 35.4 percent** and the **Black MMR increased 11.9 percent, increasing the racial difference.** The 2013-2017 **Black MMR is 4.0 times the White MMR.** Given this racial disparity, it appears that the recent decrease in the Maryland MMR is a result of the decrease in the White MMR.

https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/mch/Documents/MMR/MMR_2019_AnnualReport.pdf at p. 6 (emphasis added).

Birth To Three Strategic Initiative

Supports for families with young children

- Time to Care Act
- Screenings for young children
- Increased funding for Early Intervention

Blueprint for Maryland's Children Veto Override

- Expansion of pre-k for 3- and 4-year-olds
- Expansion of Judy Centers

Preserve and expand state support to adopt a world-class education system for Maryland's children and youth

- High quality
- Evidence-based school reform
- Equitable and accessible public education

Revise the education funding formula to reflect a sustainable revenue generating methodology to ensure funding can weather financial storms

- Eliminate disparities generated by the funding floor and shore up adequate resources for compensatory education funding

Require MSDE to provide: 1) timely discipline data, and 2) data around educational gaps to ensure accountability for:

- Students of color
- Children with identified special needs
- Children in poverty and marginalized students

Prioritize investments in behavioral health supports

- Create the proposed Maryland Consortium of Community Supports to meet the behavioral health needs of students in holistic, non-stigmatized, and coordinated ways

EDUCATION

Access to a World Class Education:

Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Bottom line: We must lay a foundation now to ensure that the disruptions children are experiencing caused by COVID-19 does not further undermine their economic security, mental and emotional health, and academic success for the rest of their lives. We want to ensure that much needed resources in education are not scaled back, but bolstered given increased demand for educational services for students.

Preserve, protect, and prioritize Pre-k 12 education in ways that account for the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis

- Learning loss
- Digital divide
- Student engagement

EDUCATION

Continue Pre-k - 12 Education Investments during COVID-19 Crisis

YOUTH JUSTICE 2021 PRIORITIES:

Advocacy Outcomes

- Through diversion and informal adjustment practices; we will memorialize the ways in which we have shrunk the youth detention population during COVID-19 by closing the front door to detention. Which will directly address the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and decrease Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) within the Department of Juvenile Services
- Simply put the legislation would stop the automatic charging of youth as adults and stop the placement of youth in adult facilities for any reason
- End the practice of sending youth far away home and move towards a closer to home or community-based model, where youth receive community and familial supports in their communities.
- Stop the use of indefinite probation.

Legislation Outcomes:

- Expanding the Informal adjustment process allows a young person's case to be diverted from the formal court process and prosecution by a juvenile State's Attorney
- Create a state inventory of all diversion services available and expand as well as standardize access to community-based diversion options.
- Eliminate the 33 statutory exclusions for all offenses committed by children in the state of Maryland
- Prohibit youth who are adjudicated delinquent from misdemeanor offenses and violations of probation from being committed for out of home placement. As well as Prohibit out-of-state placement for youth, especially young girls who are sent out of state at disparate rates, except in cases where the regional locations will benefit the youth. Build up programs in Maryland based on our population's needs and support rehabilitation close to home
- Set reasonable terms of probation based on the severity of the offense and permits for the extension of that time with a due process hearing where all parties are present, and the child is represented by counsel. Probation terms can be extended one year at a time until a child turns 21 if the court deems it necessary.

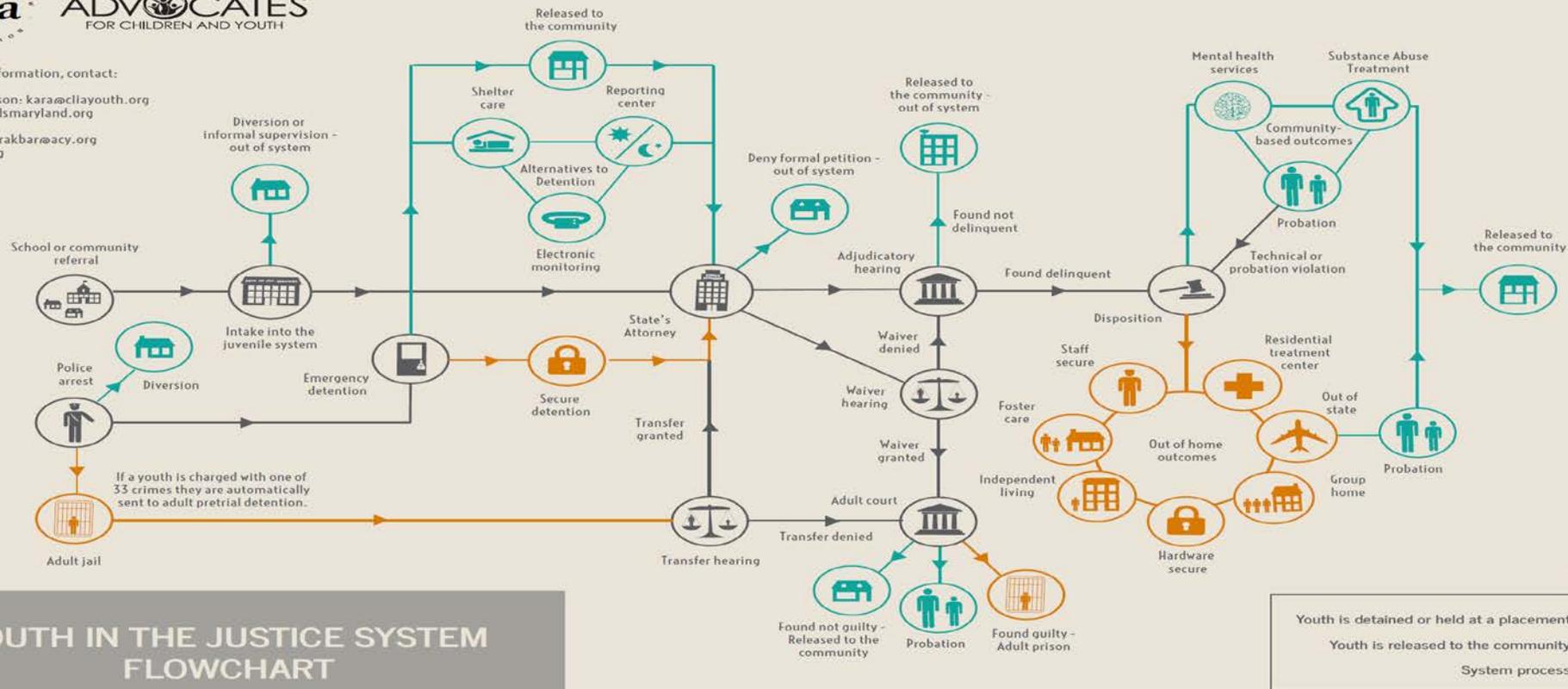
2021 YOUTH JUSTICE: CLOSE THE FRONT DOOR, SHRINK THE SYSTEM, AND CLOSE THE BACK DOOR



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**YOUTH IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM
FLOWCHART**

YOUTH JUSTICE 2021 PRIORITIES: DIVERSION

Advocacy Overview:

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YOUTH CHARGED AS ADULTS

Advocacy Overview:

- Simply put the legislation would stop the automatic charging of youth as adults and stop the placement of youth in adult facilities for any reason



Legislation Outcomes

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OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT / COMMITMENT AND DETENTION USE

- End the practice of sending youth far away home and move towards a closer to home or community-based model, where youth receive community and familial supports in their communities.

Advocacy
Overview:



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Legislation
Outcomes:



PROBATION

Advocacy Overview:

- Stop the use of indefinite probation.

Legislation Outcomes:

- Set reasonable terms of probation based on the severity of the offense and permits for the extension of that time with a due process hearing where all parties are present, and the child is represented by counsel. Probation terms can be extended one year at a time until a child turns 21 if the court deems it necessary.

CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY #1: REQUIRING THE COLLECTION OF DISAGGREGATED DATA TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

The Problem:

- Maryland's child welfare system produces inequitable outcomes for the youth and families of color it serves. In addition, black youth and families are overrepresented in the system compared to their total population.
- During the 2019 fiscal year 32,226 children were reported to DHS for suspected child abuse and neglect. Black youth represent 41% of reports although black youth only make up 33% of total child population in Maryland. When this number is compared to their white counterparts, white children make up 30% of the reports, while comprising 44% of Maryland's child population.

The Solution HB 258

- In order to address racial disparities, we must have access to timely disaggregated data by county, age, gender, race, and ethnicity to track areas of improvement.
- HB 258 requires inter-agency collaboration and data sharing between Maryland Department of Human Services and Maryland State Department of Education. The disaggregated data collected will be used to identify the scope of the problems faced by youth in foster care and to advocate for targeted interventions to improve their education and health outcomes as well as their placement stability.

CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY #2: INCREASING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION BY EXPANDING MARYLAND'S TUITION WAIVER.

The Problem

- Currently Maryland's tuition waiver program allows specific categories of youth in foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth to attend college tuition free. The current gap in the legislation is that waiver tuition does not apply to homeless youth who are accompanied by their parents.
- In addition, Maryland's tuition waiver is under-utilized by youth in foster care and youth experiencing homelessness for a variety of reasons to include administrative barriers. There is currently no grievance process in place when youth are denied access to the tuition waiver.

The Solution

- SB 155/HB 216- Allows accompanied homeless youth to qualify for the tuition waiver and creates a grievance process for students who are denied the waiver



We are every child's ally.

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