



MARFY's 2016 Public Policy Priorities

- **SUPPORT THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEM OF CARE**

MARFY will continue to promote and support initiatives that advance the development of a system of care that has as its cornerstone a comprehensive array of services to meet the needs of children and their families at any given time. We will also promote the development of an expanded array of services, funding and coordination to ensure positive outcomes for youth who are transitioning out of care.

- **ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT RATE SETTING REFORM:**

The current system for determining rates for providers of out-of-home residential services was developed in 1999 and no longer works well in an evolving child welfare system that is reducing the use of out-of-home care in favor of home and community based interventions designed to keep children in their homes whenever it is safe to do so.

The Interagency Rates Committee (IRC) has been working with the provider community to review and revise the current rate setting methodology. The group has been working to develop a process that will permit a more flexible service delivery system, reasonable reimbursement rates for providers and a means for the State to maximize federal funding mechanisms. MARFY will continue to be an active participant in this rate reform effort and will advocate for reform that not only addresses the rate setting methodology but also ensures appropriate recognition of cost drivers such as minimum wage, overtime rules, paid sick leave and MBE requirements that impact the quality of services provided as well as the financial viability of service providers.

- **ADVOCATE FOR ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT RATES:**

Since FY2009, providers have had their rates cut, frozen and limited every year through the state budget process. With strategies in place to maximize federal funding mechanisms and DHR's new ability to spend child welfare funding on less expensive in-home and community based services instead of more expensive out-of-home placements, costs to the state will be reduced. MARFY will continue to advocate for reasonable reimbursement rates and the elimination of arbitrary limits on IRC rate increases. While the State and stakeholders work on the rate setting reform process the current methodology provides sufficient rate increase limitations eliminating the need for further cuts, limitations or rate freezes.

- **SUPPORT CHILD WELFARE INITIATIVES SUCH AS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FEDERAL IV-E WAIVER**

Since 2007, the Department of Human Resources has been able to significantly reduce the number of children in out-of-home care. Continued progress toward the safe reduction of children in out-of-home care has been enhanced by initiatives such as Alternative Response and the recently awarded Federal IV-E Waiver which allows DHR to use foster care funding in a flexible way to support prevention, early intervention and aftercare services that are designed to reduce the number of children in out-of-home care and reduce length of stay when they must be removed. MARFY will continue to partner with DHR in the implementation of these programs as well as demonstration projects such as the "Community of Hope" conducted in partnership with the Casey Foundation and DHR.

- **SUPPORT JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM**

MARFY will continue to support ongoing efforts by the Department of Juvenile Services to implement data driven decision-making that has resulted in improved operations and processes including increased safety for youth and staff in its facilities, reduction in the unnecessary use of secure detention; and an expansion of gender responsive services for girls.

- **CONTINUE SUPPORT OF HEALTH CARE REFORM/INTEGRATION EFFORTS**

Maryland has become a leader in implementing health care reform. MARFY supports the continuation of reform efforts which will result in better outcomes for vulnerable children and their families such as Health Homes; behavioral health integration, and the 1915i Medicaid State Plan Amendment that will provide specialized services for children with serious emotional disorders.