Authorizing Legislation

- During the 2012 Legislative Session, House Bill 834/Chapter 397 was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor O’Malley
- Authorized the Secretary of DHR to establish an alternative response system, instead of a traditional investigation, for selected reports of suspected abuse or neglect
- Created this Advisory Council to guide the implementation of Alternative Response
- Requires DHR to contract with an independent agency to conduct an evaluation of the alternative response program
Authorizing Legislation – continued

• Requires that DHR submit an interim report to Governor and the General Assembly on its preliminary assessment of alternative response and its recommendations for continuing the alternative response program by October 2014 and a final report by October 1, 2015

• Became effective on July 1, 2012; however, implementation of alternative response in local departments of social services is prohibited before July 1, 2013
Alternative Response
Keeping children safe by engaging families

Alternative Response:
Keeping children safe by engaging families

PROVEN OUTCOMES
- No negative impact on child safety
- Recurrence of child and neglect reports decreased
- Improved family engagement and better connections to resources

REPORT OF ALLEGED MALTREATMENT

LOCAL DEPARTMENT SCREENING

SCREENED OUT REPORT

TRADITIONAL RESPONSE: INVESTIGATION
- Appropriate for high risk cases (sexual abuse, death or a serious physical or mental injury)
- Focus is a formal finding against the alleged abuser

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE: FAMILY ASSESSMENT
- Appropriate for low risk cases with no serious physical or mental injury to the child
- Focus is a plan and referrals to engage the family
- Same response timelines as investigatory response
- Cases can be reassigned at any time during the process

1) referred to other LDSS service
2) referred to community resource
3) no action needed, referral closed
Alternative Response

Keeping children safe by engaging families

Alternative Response Case Process

* Case assigned to worker ➔ Inform law enforcement (if applicable) ➔ # Face to face contact with child and parent/caregiver ➔ Evaluation of home environment

* Safety assessment on all children in household ➔ *Risk assessment completed ➔ Provide services to address immediate safety/risk/service needs ➔ *Assessment report

* Depending upon needs identified ➔ Family recieves report

Notes:
- * Supervisor approval required
- * Timeframe for response = 5 working days (neglect) or 24 hours (Physical abuse)
- Court action can be initiated at any point in AR or investigation process when safety of children indicate need

If no service needs identified, close case ➔ Refer family to community resources and close case ➔ Transfer family to In Home Consolidated Services for provision of services
WORKGROUPS
Policy Workgroup

Charge

The Policy Workgroup will develop recommendations for the Advisory Council regarding parameters for Alternative Response (AR) to include definitions, scope, and policy guidance for full implementation. The workgroup will also develop recommendations for the AR implementation plan and requirements for MD CHESSIE enhancements.

Deliverables

- Alternative response policy guidelines
- Implementation Plan
- MD CHESSIE Requirements
Practice Workgroup

Charge

The Practice Workgroup will develop recommendations for the Advisory Council regarding: training, staffing, and communication needs for a dual track Child Protective Services (CPS) system. The Practice Workgroup will also explore the interface between CPS, law enforcement, the courts, and community service providers and provide recommendations regarding best practices.

Deliverables

- Staff training curriculum
- Staff training schedule
- Comprehensive staffing models to address needs of traditional and alternative response tracks
- Sample Resource/Quality Improvement Information for workers, supervisors, administrators, law enforcement, judiciary, and community providers
- Recommendations regarding the interface between CPS, law enforcement, the courts and community service providers
Evaluation Workgroup

Charge
The Evaluation Workgroup will develop recommendations for the scope and structure of the evaluation as outlined in the authorizing statute.

Deliverables
Scope of Evaluation
Community Partners Workgroup

Charge

The Community Partners Workgroup will engage stakeholders and review existing community and statewide resources in order to develop recommendations for a community resource plan to support the implementation of Alternative Response. The workgroup will also oversee the informational stakeholder meetings across the State.

Deliverables

• Identify Key Partners
• Establish role of community partners
• Hold informational stakeholder meetings
• Develop Community Resource Plan
### ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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### POLICY WORKGROUP

- Define Core Policy Issues
- Develop Implementation Model
- Develop MD CHESSIE requirements
- Build MD CHESSIE

### PRACTICE WORKGROUP

- Develop Staff & Community Training Plan & Materials
- Develop Staffing Models
- Conduct Staff Training

### EVALUATION WORKGROUP

- Define Scope of Evaluation
- Evaluation Team Identified
- Evaluation Work Begins

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS WORKGROUP

- Identify Key Partners
- Establish Role of Community Partners
- Hold Informational Stakeholder Meetings
- Develop Community Resource Plan

### COMMUNICATIONS (CROSS CUTTING)

- Kick-Off Communication to all SSA Staff
- Kick Off External Communications
- Monthly updates (internal and external)
QUESTIONS & CLOSING DISCUSSION
Adjournment for
Introductory Workgroup Meetings
5th Floor Conference Room
(Room 508)