

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony Brown
Lt. Governor

Madore Dallas
Secretary

To: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
From: Deborah Ramelmeier, Deputy Executive Director for Programs
Social Services Administration
Date: 4/17/2012
Re: Child Abuse and Neglect - Disclosure of Information

On October 1, 2010, HB1141 went into effective. This bill requires a director of a local department of social services or the Secretary of Human Resources to disclose information to a requesting entity or individual concerning all child abuse and neglect investigations stemming from a child fatality or a near fatality irrespective of the finding. This new law altered the conditions under which specified information concerning child abuse and neglect investigations is required to be disclosed. Of importance is the requirement that the local department consult with and obtain approval from their local Office of the State's Attorney prior to the release of any of information. This is to insure that information that may influence or contaminate a prosecution not be released.

The Department received a standing request for information from a national child advocacy organization that has an interest in child welfare and transparency regarding child fatality investigations. In order to respond to that request, we need additional information on specific cases. I will be sending (under separate cover) a **Disclosure of Information** form (DHR/SSA 2037) for each child fatality for which information is needed with instructions for completion by the local director or their designee. If your local Office of the State's Attorney is requesting that information not be shared, please note it on the form.

In the future the Social Services Administration will be making revisions to the DHR/SSA 1080- B so that completion of that form will supply the Social Services Administration with needed information to respond to individual and standing requests for information. For now and until revisions can be made, please submit the attached DHR/SSA 2037 at the same time you submit the DHR/SSA 1080 B on all child protective services investigations into child fatalities.

Please direct all inquires to Steve Berry, In Home Services Manger (410-767-7018) or Vernice McKee, Analyst (410-767-7766). Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Attachment