Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services and the Maryland Department of Human Services Joins Maryland Children's Alliance to Release Public Service Announcement to Increase Awareness of Child Abuse, Resources During COVID-19 Pandemic

May 6, 2020

For immediate release:
May 6, 2020
Contact: Robyne McCullough robyne.mccullough@maryland.gov
Phone: 667.967.9022

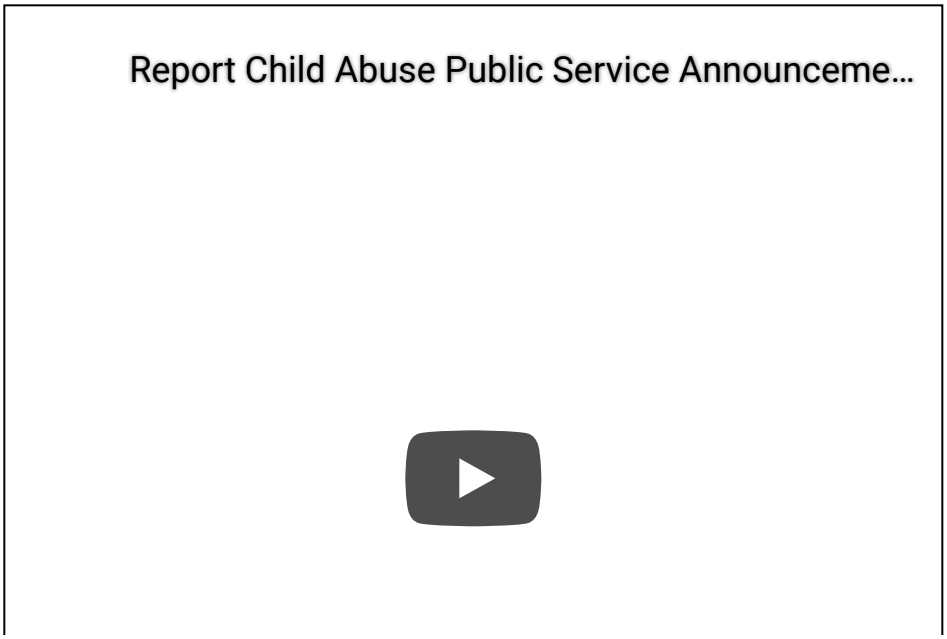
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services and the Maryland Department of Human Services Joins Maryland Children's Alliance to Release Public Service Announcement to Increase Awareness of Child Abuse, Resources During COVID-19 Pandemic

Encourages Community Members to Stay Connected; Report Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

ANNAPOLIS, MD — Today, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, Maryland Department of Human Services, and Maryland Children's Alliance, announced the release of a public service announcement to bring attention to what Marylanders can do to reduce the risk of, and intervene in suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, children may not have regular contact with teachers or other adults who are trained to spot signs of abuse and/or neglect.

"It is important to be vigilant at a time when there is physical distance between us," said Glenn Fueston, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. "We are pleased to support the work of local child advocacy centers and partners like the Maryland Department of Human Services and Maryland Children's Alliance, who work to bring trauma-informed resources to our communities, and work to reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences."

The public service announcement produced by StoryFarm for the Maryland Children's Alliance, is designed as a call to action and a resource for Marylanders to learn how to report child abuse and neglect to local law enforcement and local Departments of Social Services as listed on the Maryland Department of Human Services website at http://dhs.maryland.gov/reportchildabuse. Reports can be filed anonymously.



“In times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, our Child Protective Services workers across Maryland remain on the frontlines — helping to keep kids safe,” said Maryland Department of Human Services Secretary Lourdes R. Padilla. “We rely on communities to help alert us to situations where there might be abuse or neglect so that we can take immediate action. It is the responsibility of each of us as Marylanders to ensure a safe environment for all to thrive.”

According to the National Children’s Alliance, nearly 700,000 children are abused in the United States every year. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 20 percent of reports of abuse come from teachers and child care workers. In Maryland, approximately 28 percent of the reports of abuse come from teachers and child care workers according to the Department of Human Services.

The Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim services works closely with child advocacy centers to help mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences for children who are victims of crime. This work includes increasing the number of accredited child advocacy centers in Maryland from 10 in 2015 to 16 in 2019, and developing standards for working with youth who are victims of child sex trafficking. Child advocates report a decline in cases during the pandemic and recognize that there is danger of children feeling isolated and vulnerable as their routines have been disrupted.

“Our children count on teachers and coaches, neighbors and family members to talk with them and let them know they are there for them and want children to feel and be safe,” said Susan Hansell, Chapter Director of the Maryland Children’s Alliance. “Even during self-quarantine, our child advocacy center staff and their agency partners are ready and able to provide assistance when needed.”

“It takes a collaborative effort to make sure we can protect children,” said Adam Rosenberg LifeBridge Health Vice President, Violence Intervention and Prevention and President of the Maryland Children’s Alliance. “Our front line workers in law enforcement, child welfare, and child protective services work well together to make sure we can respond to every report of abuse – and we need the public to be a part of our team now more than ever.”

In March, the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services released a similar public service announcement highlighting ways victims of domestic violence could receive help. The Office also put

together a webpage of resources available to victims of crime and victim service providers. It can be found here: http://goccp.maryland.gov/covid19-victim-resources/.

To learn more about the common signs of possible child abuse or neglect and how to report it, people can visit the Maryland Department of Human Services website at dhs.maryland.gov/knowthesigns. For daily updates on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak and the State of Maryland's response, please visit the Maryland Department of Health's Coronavirus Page: https://coronavirus.maryland.gov.

Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services
100 Community Place, 1st Floor
Crownsville, MD 21032

410-697-9338