

# CITIZENS REVIEW BOARD FOR CHILDREN

## COMMUNITY CONNECTOR



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# CRBC Moving Forward

In 2016 CRBC held 2 New Member Orientation and Training Sessions were in Essex, Maryland and 1 in Dorchester County to train a total of 21 new CRBC members from across the state.

CRBC met with Local Department Directors and administrative staff in Baltimore City, Carroll, Dorchester, Howard, Frederick, Somerset, Worcester and Wicomico counties. Discussion topics included child welfare in the region, CRBC updates, CRBC review findings, services, resources, plans, goals, initiatives and advocacy.

In January 2016 the Coordinators of Maryland's 3 citizen panels, Claudia Remington, Executive Director of the State Council for Child Abuse and Neglect (SCCAN), Richa Ranade, Coordinator, Center for Maternal and Child Health Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, State Child Fatality Review Team (SCFRT) and Denise E. Wheeler, Administrator of the Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) participated in a planning coordination meeting for updates and to discuss and explore ways to work collaboratively moving forward.

**CRBC Mission:** To conduct case reviews of children in out of home care, make timely individual case and systemic recommendations; and advocate for legislative and systematic child welfare improvements to promote safety and permanency.

**CRBC Vision:** We envision the protection of all children from abuse and neglect, only placing children in out-of-home care when necessary; and providing families the help they need to stay intact; children will be safe in a permanent living arrangement.

## Legislation

CRBC has a Children's Legislative Action Committee that weighs in on relevant legislation and makes recommendation to the State Board. CRBC also is an organizational member of the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children (CPMC). During the 2016 Legislative session, CRBC supported (written/oral testimony) 17 bills and there were 24 bills that CPMC supported with CRBC agreement.

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## **Planning & Training Conference**

In May 2016 CRBC State Board members, Local Out-of-Home Placement Review Board Chairs and CRBC staff attended a planning and training conference. Presenters included Wendy Lane, MD, MPH, Claudia Remington, Executive Director of SCCAN and Craig Eichler, Chief of Staff/Deputy Secretary of Strategy and Administration, Department of Human Resources (DHR). Michael Dorsey, HRDT Training Manager, facilitated a session focused on working as a group and members participated in team building activities. The purpose of the conference was for networking and planning regarding CRBC local boards, training, and the health, safety and well-being of children in foster care. The State Board adopted plans to focus more on services and quality of services provided to foster children in areas such as health/mental health and education, in addition to focusing on older youth and barriers to permanency for fiscal year 2017. Safety and well-being of children and youth in foster care remains eminent. Wendy Lane presented on Improving Health Care Services for Children Involved in the Maryland Child Welfare System. Claudia Remington presented on Maryland's Citizen Review Panels (SCCAN, SCFRT, CRBC) and the Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA). Craig Eichler, presented on efficiency and DHR proposed changes.

## **Eastern Shore Circuit Meeting**

In June 2016 CRBC held a Circuit meeting on the Eastern Shore at Dorchester County Local Department of Social Services. State Board Members, Local Out-of-Home Placement Review Board Members from the Upper and Lower Eastern Shore, Dorchester County administrative staff and CRBC staff attended the Circuit Meeting. Presenters included Susan Schumacher, Assistant Director of CASA of the Mid-Shore, Kelly Brinkley, Volunteer Services Manager for Worcester County, Christle Waples, Program Specialist at Chesapeake College, Philip Thompson, Assistant Director of Dorchester County Department of Social Services and Nicholette Smith-Bligen, Director of Dorchester County DSS. The focus was on children and older youth in foster care, education including preparation for higher education, community services and opportunities, outreach and working collaboratively.

## **CRBC Traveling State Board Meeting**

In October 2016 CRBC's State Board meeting was held in St. Mary's County at the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services. Prior to the meeting, State Board Members and CRBC staff met with members of the administrative team at St. Mary's County, discussed child welfare in the region, provided updates and discussed recruitment plans and activities. The State Board voted and adopted new policy regarding required in-service training for Local Out-of-Home Placement Review Board Members. Members will be required to attend designated in-service training annually. The first training is scheduled for the spring of 2017.