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for Families and Children

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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# Maryland Child Welfare Performance Indicators

## 2nd Annual Child Welfare Accountability Report

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## Executive Summary

The Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006 (Maryland Family Law, Section 1301 through 1311 inclusive) specified a set of performance indicators covering four categories of child welfare practice:

1. Child abuse and neglect,
2. Protecting children in out-of-home care from abuse and neglect,
3. Permanency and stability of children in out-of-home care, and
4. Effectiveness of efforts to address the health, mental health, education, and well-being of children in out-of-home care.

This report describes and documents the performance indicators mandated in the Act for the period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. A separate companion report entitled *Evaluating Quality Assurance Processes in Maryland* describes and evaluates Quality Assurance processes in calendar year 2008.

## **Summary of Findings**

Many of the indicators specified in the Child Welfare Accountability Act did not originally have state or federal benchmarks. One of the purposes of the first report (completed in December 2007) was to establish baselines from which to examine performance of child welfare services and outcomes over time. Highlights from the current report are listed below and a summary table is included in Appendix A. Comparison of findings between the 2007 and 2008 reports should be interpreted with caution given differences in data sources between the reports. Additionally, although the quality of data in MD CHESSIE has improved considerably over the past year, there are still some items that are difficult to interpret because of missing data. The reader is encouraged to carefully refer to all footnotes and narrative descriptions for information about indicators that should be interpreted with caution.

## **MD CHESSIE Data System**

**DHR/SSA has improved the integrity of data elements affecting payments and federal reporting.** The transition from the legacy data system (FACTS) to MD CHESSIE required a complete change in the culture and process of child welfare practice in Maryland. FACTS required minimal data entry by frontline staff, but MD CHESSIE is a complete case management system requiring front line staff to accept responsibility for directly documenting their service process in electronic form within the MD CHESSIE system. Additionally, MD CHESSIE contains many important data elements not found in the electronic legacy system nor required by the federal reporting systems (AFCARS/NCANDS). During this reporting period DHR/SSA has focused staff effort on insuring the data integrity of data elements that effect payment and federal reporting.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

**Maryland improved performance on protecting children from repeat maltreatment.** Specifically, 94.3% of children were safe without another indicated report within 6 months (e.g., above the federal median score of 93.3% but below the federal standard of 94.6%). Over 12 months, 9% of child maltreatment victims experienced another incident of abuse or neglect. For children who remained in their homes, Maryland demonstrated improvement by reducing the rate of repeat maltreatment from 9.0% (reported in the 2007 report) to 7.8% (reported in the 2008 report).

**Child Protective Services investigations were not consistently initiated and completed in accordance with the timeframes set forward in state policy.** The mandates provided in Maryland Family Law §5-706 require that child protective services investigations be initiated within 24 hours for reports of abuse and within 5 days for reports of neglect. In addition, Maryland Family Law §5-706 states that investigations should be completed within 10 days of the receipt of the investigation and if an investigation is not completed within 30 days, it must be completed within 60 days of the receipt of the investigation. In 2008, 88.2% of investigations were initiated within 5 days, 12.1% were closed in 10 days, 44.7% were completed within 30 days, and 80.4% were completed within 60 days.

**100% of screened out referrals were reviewed and approved by a supervisor.** In 2008, Maryland was in compliance with the requirement for supervisory review of all screened-out referrals.

**Family Preservation Services were used more frequently to keep children safe and families intact.** 23.1% of families with maltreatment were provided FPS—up from 7.4% in 2005. 82.8% of children who received FPS were able to remain safely in their homes for 18 months—up from 75.2% in 2005 (reported in the 2007 report).

## **Protection of Children in Out-of-Home Care**

**Maryland successfully protected children in out-of-home care from abuse and neglect, exceeding the federal standard.** 99.8% of children in out-of-home care were safe from abuse or

neglect from a caregiver.

**The percent of children who experienced maltreatment after exiting out-of-home care remains low.** 6.2% of children exiting out-of-home care were victims of indicated or unsubstantiated maltreatment between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 versus 5.1% in 2005.

## Permanency and Stability for Children in Out-of-Home Care

**Maryland scored better than the national median score for placement stability.** 92.2% of children in out-of-home placement experienced no more than 2 placements. This is above 85.9%, the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of scores nationally.

**Maryland fell below the national median on time to reunification.** 50.9% of children exiting to reunification in Maryland did so within 12 months; the national median for this measure is 69.9%. Only 18.9% of first time entries to out-of-home care who were in care for at least 8 days exited to reunification within 12 months; the national median for this measure is 39.4%.

**Maryland fell below the national median on time to adoption.** Only 25.5% of children exiting to adoption did so within 24 months of entry into out-of-home care; the national median for this measure is 26.8%. Only 2.6% of children who had been in out-of-home care for 17 months had a finalized adoption by the end of the year; the national median for this measure is 20.2%.

**Maryland fell below the national median on permanent exits for children who were legally free for adoption.** 90.7% of children legally free for adoption exited to a permanent home prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The national median for this measure is 96.8%.

**Maryland fell below the national median on permanent exits for children in care for 24 months or longer.** 17.8% of children in out-of-home care for at least 24 months were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The national median for this measure is 25%.

**Maryland scored better than the national median for children reentering care after reunification.** 10.8% of children exiting out-of-home care reentered within 12 months. 8.4% of children exiting out-of-home care to reunification reentered out-of-home care within 12 months; the national median for this measure is 9.0%.

## Health, Mental Health, Education, and Well-Being for Children in Out-of-Home Care

**The MD CHESSIE system allows Maryland to report on many of the child well-being measures that were not in the electronic legacy data system nor required for payment or federal reporting systems.** This report contains data from MD-CHESSIE on measures related to comprehensive assessments, health examinations, education, and sibling measures whereas the 2007 report did not. However, due to lack of completeness in these data elements, MD CHESSIE cannot produce reliable estimates of well-being indicators at this time. 46.8% of out-of-home care cases had health information entered into MD CHESSIE and 80.6% had education information entered into MD CHESSIE.

## ***Summary of Recommendations for Measurement of Maryland's Child Welfare System Performance***

Recommendations for continuing to strengthen Maryland's evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of child welfare services follow.

- Continue to develop and improve the Children's Electronic Social Services Information Exchange (CHESSIE). SSA is making tremendous strides in developing the MD CHESSIE system. It is imperative that the energy and focus that has been driving the development and improvement of CHESSIE continue. As MD CHESSIE improves, the state will increase the capacity to effectively and routinely report on the outputs and outcomes of child welfare services in Maryland.
- Continue to allow flexibility in reporting the Child Welfare Accountability Act indicators.
- Incorporate entry cohort measures to track children over time and to examine the trajectories of service utilization for children and families over time.
- Explore differential outcomes for subgroups of children and families to highlight potential differences by gender, age groups, and race/ethnicity in future reports.

# Methods for Calculating Maryland's Child Welfare Performance Indicators

The Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006, defined by HB-799 and SB-792, and codified in Maryland Family Law, Section 1301 through 1311 inclusive, specifies a set of performance indicators that relate to four categories of child welfare practice:

1. Child abuse and neglect,
2. Protecting children in out-of-home care from abuse and neglect,
3. Permanency and stability of children in out-of-home care, and
4. Addressing the health, mental health, education, and well-being of children in out-of-home care.

The purpose of this report is to update the Maryland State Legislature on the performance of Maryland's child welfare system as defined in the Act. This section of the report details the data used to compile the measures and introduces important caveats and cautions related to interpreting findings presented in the sections that follow.

## ***MD CHESSIE***

The initial report, published in 2007, consisted of population-level data from Maryland's legacy data system (FACTS - Foster Care and Child Tracking System) and sample-level data collected from in-depth reviews of randomly selected cases across the state. The population-level data examined calendar year 2005 as it was the last year prior to conversion from the legacy FACTS data system to MD CHESSIE. The 2007 report established a baseline from which to measure progress. This current report consists of population-level measures derived from the Children's Electronic Social Services Information Exchange (MD CHESSIE) system for the time period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008.

MD CHESSIE is the system of record for the Maryland Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration and is the source of all data used to develop the performance indicators for this report. The MD CHESSIE system is relatively new to Maryland. It was implemented in phases starting with Harford County in February 2006 and ending with Baltimore City in January 2007.

Using statewide administrative data provides the opportunity to calculate performance indicators based on the entire population of children and families served by Maryland's child welfare system. However, administrative data systems are primarily designed for program management purposes and not for calculating performance measures over time. When considering the performance indicators, it is important to note some challenges with MD CHESSIE data. Most of these challenges are temporary and time-limited given the relatively recent shift to the MD CHESSIE system.

**Line staff are responsible for directly entering case-level data in CHESSIE.** The transition from the legacy data system (FACTS) to MD CHESSIE required a complete change in the culture and process of child welfare practice in Maryland. FACTS required minimal data entry by frontline staff, but MD CHESSIE is a complete case management system requiring front line staff to accept responsibility for directly documenting their service process in electronic form within the CHESSIE system.

**Transferring cases into a new data system presented conversion issues.** During the implementation of MD CHESSIE, client and case information was converted from the legacy data system by jurisdiction while new information was concurrently entered into MD CHESSIE. Since implementation,

conversion issues, practice barriers, and technological stumbling blocks (slow system performance in particular) have presented challenges. As issues were identified in MD CHESSIE, DHR moved quickly to address and overcome barriers to successful implementation.

**MD CHESSIE was designed for a different practice model.** MD CHESSIE was designed as a case management system and changing policies and practice at the state level initially led to confusion regarding which data items were mandatory. Consequently, front line staff members have struggled with making optimal use of the MD CHESSIE case management system. Policy documents and system fixes were implemented to address the most pressing MD CHESSIE issues and the state continues to improve the MD CHESSIE system to match state policy/practice.

*With these considerations in mind, it is possible that some observed changes in the performance indicators provided in this report are due, at least in part, to changes in data reporting and measurement or changes in reporting timeframes and not due to changes in actual child welfare performance.*

### **Modifications of Indicators**

Throughout the construction of the performance indicators, UM/SSW carefully based measures on the most accurate and complete data available. Based on data constraints, some indicators must be reported with slight modifications or special considerations.

Timeframes were sometimes shifted to include jurisdictions that implemented MD CHESSIE toward the end of the roll out period, including Baltimore City. Due to these variations, timeframes used in the analysis are explicitly defined for each indicator.

Measures relying on fields with large amounts of missing data (e.g. assessments of children in out of home care and regulation of foster and kinship homes) were calculated on the sub-sample of the population with non-missing data.

When a state performance indicator was closely related to a federal standard, faculty calculated both the state measure and the federal measure. This allows for comparison of the state and federal indicators and allows Maryland to track progress on federally-mandated indicators of child welfare system performance.

## §5-1303. Child Abuse and Neglect

The first set of indicators concern child abuse and neglect. The Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006 addresses the following items:

1. Recurrence of abuse or neglect
2. Supervisory review of screened out cases
3. Maltreatment of children remaining in the home after CPS investigation
4. Timeliness of CPS investigations
5. Service provision and safety outcomes for indicated and unsubstantiated cases of abuse and neglect.

In this report "victims of maltreatment" are defined by an indicated or unsubstantiated report of abuse or neglect.

### §5-1303.1. Recurrence of abuse or neglect

<b>Maryland Measure</b>	<b>2007 Report<sup>1</sup> (N=13,502)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=4,635)</b>
<b>Indicator §5-1303.1a:</b> Of the children who were victims of indicated or unsubstantiated child abuse or neglect whose investigations closed during the period January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007 what is the recurrence within 12 months of child abuse or neglect among victims of indicated abuse and neglect?	9.0%	9.0%

<b>Federal Measure</b>	<b>2007 Report<sup>1</sup> (N=13,502)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=3,651)</b>
<b>Indicator §5-1303.1b:</b> Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated abuse or neglect during the first 6 months of the reporting year (July 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007), what percent experienced another incident of substantiated or indicated abuse or neglect within a 6-month period?	5.1% <sup>2</sup>	5.7%
<b>Indicator §5-1303.1c:</b> Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated abuse or neglect during the first 6 months of the reporting year (July 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007), what percent did not experience another incident of substantiated or indicated abuse or neglect within a 6 month period?	Not reported	94.3%

The sample used for this indicator consisted of victims of maltreatment under age 17 whose investigations closed during the first six months of 2007. Of these 4,635 children, 9.0%

1 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on closed investigations in 2004 (n=13,502).

2 To report Indicator §5-1303.1b in the 2007 report, calendar year 2004 was used instead of the first six months of the period as defined in the federal measure. The methodology was changed to more closely mirror the federal measure for this report.

(n=419) were recorded as victims of maltreatment within 12 months of the original investigation closure date. This percentage is unchanged from the baseline measure using calendar year 2004 as the sample.

In addition to the recurrence within 12 months of child abuse or neglect indicator required in the CWAA, the federally required Child and Family Service Review measure for recurrence of abuse or neglect within 6 months was calculated. Of the 3,651 children<sup>3</sup> who were victims of an indicated or unsubstantiated abuse or neglect report during the first 6 months of the reporting year, 5.7% (n=208) were recorded as victims on a subsequent indicated or unsubstantiated abuse or neglect investigation within 6 months. 94.3% of children did not experience recurrence of abuse or neglect. Maryland falls below 94.6%, the federal standard for recurrence of abuse or neglect. However, Maryland scored above the median of 93.3% reported by the Administration for Children and Families for all states.

**§5-1303.3. Maltreatment of Children Remaining in the Home after CPS Investigation**

	<b>2007 Report<sup>4</sup> (N=13,435)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=4,168)</b>
<b>Indicator §5-1303.3:</b> Of the children who were victims of indicated or unsubstantiated child abuse or neglect whose investigations closed between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007 and were not placed in out-of-home care, what is the incidence of child abuse or neglect for a child who, in the prior 12 months, was not removed from the home following an investigation that found indicated or unsubstantiated abuse or neglect?"	9.0%	7.8%

The sample used for this indicator consisted of maltreatment victims whose investigations closed during the first six months of 2007 and who were not placed in out-of-home care within 30 days of the investigation closure. Of these 4,168 children, 7.8% (n=326) were recorded as victims on a subsequent indicated or unsubstantiated abuse or neglect investigation which opened within 12 months of the original investigation closure date. This percentage is an improvement from the baseline measure of 9.0% using calendar year 2004 as the sample.

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3 The federal measure requires that both the referral and disposition dates occur within the time period. If we do not put the limitation that both the referral and investigation dates have to be within the period being examined the number of children increases to 6,348 and the percent of children who were recorded as victims of indicated or unsubstantiated abuse or neglect is 5.6% (n=352).

4 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on closed investigations in 2004 that did not lead to a child being removed from their home (n=13,435).

### **§5-1303.2. Supervisory Review of Screened Out Cases**

	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=23,166)</b>
<b>Indicator §5-1303.2:</b> "The percentage of screened out reports between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 that are documented as reviewed by a supervisor."	Could not report	99.8%

Maryland was unable to report on this measure in the initial CWAA report using the legacy data system, but it is now possible to report results using MD CHESSIE. Of the 23,166 referrals that were screened out between July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, 99.8% (n=23,117) were documented as reviewed by a supervisor. Under current practice, supervisors are required to review each case before it can be screened out, so theoretically, current policy and practice suggests that 100% of screened out cases should be reviewed by a supervisor. When 49 screened out referrals with missing values in this field were excluded, the remaining cases showed that 100% of screened out referrals were approved by a supervisor. There is no comparable federal indicator for this measure.

### **§5-1303.4. Timeliness of CPS Investigations**

The mandates provided in §5-706 require that child protective services investigations are initiated within 24 hours for reports of abuse and within 5 days for reports of neglect. In addition, it is stated that:

"To the extent possible, an investigation...shall be completed within 10 days after receipt of the first notice of the suspected abuse or neglect by the local department or law enforcement agencies (g)(1). An investigation...which is not completed within 30 days shall be completed within 60 days of receipt of the first notice of the suspected abuse or neglect (g)(2)."

<b>Indicator §5-1303.4a:</b> Of the 7,307 investigations initiated between June 4, 2008 and October 2, 2008, the percentage of child protective services investigations that are initiated and completed in accordance with §5-706.			
	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=7,307)</b>	
Investigations initiated within 5 days	Not Reported <sup>5</sup>	88.2%	
<b>Indicator §5-1303.4b:</b> Of the 7,307 investigations initiated between June 4, 2008 and October 2, 2008, "the percentage of child protective services investigations that are initiated and completed in accordance with §5-706."			
		<b>2008 Report</b>	
	<b>2007 Report<sup>6</sup></b>	Percent based on possible completion within time <sup>7</sup>	Percent based on number of closed investigations <sup>8</sup>
completed within 10 days	(N=8,080) 5.6%	(N=7,148) 5.8%	(N=3,428) 12.1%
completed within 30 days	26.9%	(N=6,519) 23.5%	(N=3,428) 44.7%
completed within 60 days	70.5%	(N=5,600) 49.1%	(N=3,428) 80.4%
<b>Note:</b> The percentages displayed in the table are not meant to be totaled. The column labeled "Percent based on possible completion" has percentages calculated using different time periods for each row based on the number of investigations open longer than the designated time period. The column labeled "Percent based on closed investigations" has percentages calculated using the total number of closed investigations occurring during the designated time period.			

The sample for this indicator is all investigations that were opened between June 4, 2008

<sup>5</sup> The legacy system did not record an investigation start date.

<sup>6</sup> The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWA report was based on closed investigations between September 3, 2005 and December 21, 2005 (n=8,080).

<sup>7</sup> The possible completion time refers to whether it was possible for the investigation to be closed within the number of days being examined. For instance if an investigation opened in late September and was not yet closed by October 4, that investigation will be counted in the denominator because it could have been closed within 10 days, even though it was not.

<sup>8</sup> The percent based on closed investigations mirrors the 2007 report methodology of only using closed investigations. See the narrative for more complete discussion.

and October 2, 2008 (n=7,307)<sup>9</sup>. Of these investigations, 88.2% (n=6,445) began within 5 days of the referral receipt. 94.3% (n=6,889) of the investigations began within 10 days of referral receipt.

Two means of calculating the percent of investigations being completed were used. One uses the total number of open and closed investigations as the denominator. The other uses completed investigations as the denominator.

*Percent based on possible completion:* 7,148 investigations were opened for at least 10 days. Of these 7,148 investigations, 5.8% (n=413) closed within 10 days of initiation of the investigation. 6,519 investigations were open at least 30 days. Of these 6,519 investigations, 23.5% (n=1,531) closed within 30 days of initiation of the investigation. 5,600 investigations were open at least 60 days. Of these 5,600 investigations, 49.1% (n=2,752) closed within 60 days of initiation of the investigation.

The percentage of investigations completed within 10 days is slightly higher than was reported in the initial CWAA report (5.8% compared to 5.6%). However, the percentage of investigations completed within 30 or 60 days are both lower than what was reported using the 2005 legacy data (23.5% now compared to 26.9% in 2005 for completed within 30 days and 49.1% now compared to 70.5% in 2005).

*Percent based on closed investigations:* Of the 7,307 investigations, 3,428 were closed prior to 10/2/2008<sup>10</sup>. Using the 3,428 completed investigations: 12.1% (n=413) were completed within 10 days; 44.7% (n=1,531) were completed within 30 days; and 80.4% (n=2,752) were completed within 60 days. The interpretations of these percents need to be made with caution. The denominator excludes any investigation that was open for longer periods of time and is therefore an inflated number.

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<sup>9</sup> A complicating factor in this indicator is that investigations resulting in a disposition of "ruled out" are expunged from the system after 120 days from the original investigation start date. Because the extract used for this analysis was created on October 2, 2008, only time to completion for investigations that opened between 6/4/2008 and 10/2/2008 can be measured.

<sup>10</sup> This is a smaller percentage of closed cases than was reported in the earlier CWAA report. This difference is due to the ability in the prior report to use 2006 data sources to fill in any investigation that projected beyond the end of the period (December 31, 2005). Because the extract used for this analysis was created on October 2, 2008 there is no additional information available for investigations after the extract date time period.

**§5-1303.5. Service Provision and Safety Outcomes for Indicated and Unsubstantiated Cases of Abuse and Neglect**

<b>Indicator §5-1303.5:</b> For all indicated and unsubstantiated cases of abuse and neglect between January 1, 2007 and March 31, 2007, the percentage of children who: a) receive family preservation services; and b) are able to remain safely in their own homes for 18 months after receiving family preservation services.		
	<b>2007 Report<sup>11</sup> (N=12,440)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=1,187)</b>
a) Children who receive Family Preservation Services (FPS)	7.4%	23.1%

	<b>2007 Report (N=924)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=274)</b>
b) Receive FPS & remain safely in their homes for 18 months	75.2%	82.8%

	<b>2007 Report (N=11,516)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=913)</b>
c) Do not receive FPS & remain safely in their homes for 18 months	83.5%	91.1%

The sample used for this indicator included victims of maltreatment under age 16.5 whose investigations closed during the first three months of 2007 and who were not placed in out-of-home care within 30 days of the investigation closure. Of these 1,187 children<sup>12</sup>, 23.1% (n=274) received Family Preservation Services within 30 days of the investigation start date<sup>13</sup>.

82.8% (n=227) of the children identified as receiving FPS were not victims of maltreatment nor were they placed in out-of-home care within 18 months of the original investigation closure date.

In order to provide some context for this indicator, the same information is presented for the 913 children who were victims of maltreatment, but did not receive Family Preservation Services within 30 days of the investigation begin date. Among these children, 91.1% (n=832) were not victims of maltreatment nor were they placed in out-of-home care in the 18 months after the original investigation closed.

It is not surprising that the percent of children receiving FPS and who remain safely in their

11 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children who were victims of indicated or unsubstantiated child abuse or neglect in an investigation closed between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004 and were not placed in out of home care within 30 days of the investigation closure (n=12,440).

12 Due to the transition of Baltimore City from the legacy data system to MD CHESSIE in January of 2007 the number of investigations during this period is lower than would be expected. According to the State Stat reports in January through March of 2008 there were approximately 3,000 investigations (this is a duplicated count of investigations including all age groups).

13 Family Preservation services were identified by using the agency program area identifier for in home services.

homes is lower than those who did not receive FPS services. By definition, Family Preservation Services are provided for families at highest risk of out-of-home placement. Based on this fact alone, children in families who receive Family Preservation Services would be at higher risk for subsequent maltreatment and out-of-home placement than children whose families do not receive such services.

It is difficult to compare this measure with the results from the prior report for a number of reasons. First, due to the limited time frame that MD CHESSIE has been operational; the base period for the indicator could only include one quarter (January 1, 2007 through March 31, 2007) compared to a full years worth of information from the legacy data system. Second, the base time period being used for this measure includes the month during which Baltimore City was transitioning from the legacy system to MD CHESSIE, therefore the largest jurisdiction is not fully represented in the base time period.

## §5-1304. Protecting Children in Out-of-Home Care from Abuse and Neglect

The second set of indicators concern protecting children in out-of-home care from abuse and neglect. The Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006 includes the following items:

1. Abuse or neglect of children in state custody
2. Abuse or neglect after release from out-of-home care

For the purpose of this report, children are identified as victims of maltreatment if they have an indicated or unsubstantiated report of abuse or neglect.

### §5-1304.1. Abuse or Neglect of Children in State Custody

<b>Indicator §5-1304 (1):</b> Of the children in out-of-home care during the period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, what is the incidence of maltreatment of children in the custody of a local department, or a placement agency, for out-of-home placements?		
	<b>2007 Report<sup>14</sup></b> <b>(N=12,594)</b>	<b>2008 Report</b> <b>(N=13,199)</b>
Federal Definition of Abuse in Care: Children with a finding of indicated or unsubstantiated child abuse or neglect while in out-of-home care.	0.63%	0.21%
Any abuse occurring in care regardless of relationship type: Children with a finding of indicated or unsubstantiated child abuse or neglect while in out-of-home care.	2.7%	2.31%

Measuring the occurrence of abuse or neglect of children in out-of-home care with administrative data is challenging. Reports of abuse or neglect that occur during an out-of-home placement could have been perpetrated by someone other than the out-of-home care provider (for example the family during a trial home visit, or another youth in the out-of-home placement), or may have occurred prior to the start of the out-of-home placement. Research reveals that reporting of additional abuse and neglect incidents that occurred some time other than during an out-of-home care episode is not uncommon, ranging from 16% to 25% of identified cases (Garnier & Poertner, 2000; Tittle, Garnier & Poertner, 2001). In order to have an accurate understanding of abuse and neglect in out-of-home care, it is critical to know the relationship of the maltreater to the child and the timing of the alleged maltreatment. MD CHESSIE has the capacity to identify the relationship between the child and the maltreater and has a field that is designed to capture when the maltreatment occurred. Caution should be used however, because the results of this measure rely on accurate information to be entered into the relationship table that correctly identifies the perpetrator, the victim, and their relationship.

There were 13,660 out-of-home placements for 13,199 children between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. During these out-of-home placements, 389 instances of maltreatment involving 306 children were found. 30 indicated or unsubstantiated reports involving 28

<sup>14</sup> The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children in removal episodes active in calendar year 2005 (n=12,594).

children identified the out-of-home care providers as the maltreater<sup>15</sup>.

The federal measure for abuse in care asks: "Of all children in foster care during the reporting period, what percent were not victims of maltreatment by foster parents or facility staff members?" In Maryland 99.8% of children were not victims of maltreatment by foster parents or facility staff members. This figure is above the national standard of 99.68%.

The results of this indicator are lower than the calendar year 2005 results based on the legacy data system (2.3% compared to 2.7%). The difference is more significant when examining children who were identified as being abused or neglected by an out-of-home caregiver (0.20% now compared to 0.63% in calendar year 2005).

### ***§5-1304.2. Abuse or Neglect after Release from Out-of-Home Care***

	<b>2007 Report<sup>16</sup> (N=5,955)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=1,386)</b>
<b>Indicator §5-1304 (2):</b> Of the children who exited out-of-home care between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007, what is the incidence of indicated or unsubstantiated findings of child abuse or neglect within 12 months following the release of the child committed to the department?	5.1%	6.2%

The sample for this indicator includes all children under the age of 17 who exited out-of-home care or aftercare in the first six months of 2007. Among these 1,386 children, 6.2% (n=86) were the victim of maltreatment within 12 months of exit from out-of-home care. The percent of children leaving care who have an instance of indicated or unsubstantiated abuse or neglect within 12 months has increased from the baseline measure of 5.1%. However, this rate remains below 9% rate of repeat maltreatment established in §5-1303.1.

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15 The relationship codes between the victim and the perpetrator used to identify abuse in care are: ( '10135' Residential Facility Staff, '1636' Daughter (Foster), '1640' Father (Foster), '1660' Mother (Foster), '1678' Son (Foster), '4045' Therapeutic Foster Father, '4046' Therapeutic Foster Mother, '4047' Therapeutic Foster Son, '4048' Therapeutic Foster Daughter, and '6471' Foster Parent).

16 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children exiting removal episodes in calendar year 2004 (n=5,955).

## **§5-1305. Permanency and Stability of Children in Out-of-Home Care**

The third set of indicators concern permanency and stability for children in out-of-home care. The Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006 includes the following items:

1. Time to exit from out-of-home care
2. Multiple placements during over a one-year period
3. Placement with siblings
4. Exits from out-of-home care
5. Placement type
6. Number of available foster homes and treatment foster homes
7. Regulation of foster and kinship homes
8. Re-entry into out-of-home care

The indicators in this section have been re-organized to increase readability and interpretation by grouping similar indicators together. Characteristics of the placement are presented first, including placement type, placement with siblings, and number of placements. Characteristics of exit, including type of permanency, time to exit, and re-entry are presented second. Finally, the number of resource family homes and their regulation are presented.

## §5-1305.5. Out-of-Home Placement Type

<b>Indicator §5-1305.5:</b> "The percent of children living in out-of-home placement..." by placement type on July 1, 2008	<b>2007 Report<sup>17</sup></b> <b>(N=10,281)</b>	<b>2008 Report</b> <b>(N=9,363)</b>
Trial Home Visit	3.7%	4.1%
Kinship Care	33.3%	21.2%
Restricted Foster Homes	5.6%	8.7%
Regular Foster Homes	16.9%	17.0%
Treatment Foster Homes	14.7%	21.0%
Group Homes	13.9%	17.0%
Adoptive Homes	1.7%	2.7%
Other Placements	10.2%	8.3%

There were 9,363 children in care on July 1, 2008 according to MD CHESSIE. This is 918 fewer children than were in care on January 1, 2005 (n=10,281) an 8.9% reduction. This number includes all children in an active removal episode on July 1, 2008 who had an indication of either an open out-of-home living arrangement or an open out-of-home placement on July 1, 2008<sup>18</sup>.

- Trial home visits<sup>19</sup> are identified as children living in a trial home visit setting or living with parents, or a parent, while still in the care and custody of the state (n=381).
- Kinship care includes children in relative foster homes and children identified as living with relatives<sup>20</sup> (n=1,983).
- Restricted (relative) foster homes include children placed in restricted relative foster home placements only (n=810).

<sup>17</sup> The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWA report was based on children in out-of-home care on January 1, 2005 (n=10,281).

<sup>18</sup> MD CHESSIE has two ways of documenting the location of a child in a removal episode. Placements are the formal placements of a child in out-of-home care and include foster homes, group homes, pre-adoptive homes, etc. Living arrangements are more broadly defined and can include children living at home on a trial basis, children being in the hospital, children in temporary detention, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Trial home visits are identified as living arrangement type of trial home visit or living with a parent and include the following codes: '1046'='Trial Visit Home ', '1511'='Mother and Fathers Home ', '1520'='Fathers Home ', '1521'='Father and Stepmother/Paramour ', '1535'='Mothers Home ', '1536'='Mother and Stepfather/Paramour '.

<sup>20</sup> Kinship homes include the Placement Identifier for formal kinship home as well as the living arrangement type of LDSS relative foster home and relative foster home.

- Regular foster homes include regular DSS foster homes and private agency foster homes (n=1,595).
- Children in treatment foster homes are identified from the code for treatment foster homes<sup>21</sup> (n=1,967).
- Group homes include both shelter group care and group care (n=1,589).
- The adoptive homes category includes the codes for pre-finalized adoptive home and adoptive home<sup>22</sup> (n=250).
- The other placement categories include: Residential Treatment Centers; State Institutional Care; Incarcerated; Legal Risk Placement; Independent Living; Runaway; Semi-Independent Living; Private Treatment Facility; and Other (n=818)<sup>23</sup>.

It is also possible to compare the information from the 2008 report to the State Stat reports (monthly hand counts done by the local jurisdictions to validate the number of children in care). As can be seen, the difference between the hand count number and the values obtained from MD CHESSIE is 206 children.

<b>Indicator §5-1305.5:</b> "The percent of children living in out-of-home placement..." by placement type on July 1, 2008	<b>MD CHESSIE (N=9,363)</b>	<b>State Stat (N=9,569)</b>
Trial Home Visit	4.1%	3.7%
Kinship Care	21.2%	18.1%
Restricted Foster Homes	8.7%	10.9%
Regular Foster Homes	17.0%	19.6%
Treatment Foster Homes	21.0%	18.5%
Group Homes	17.0%	14.8%
Adoptive Homes	2.7%	4.5%
Other Placements	8.3%	10.0%

This small difference in overall counts is a good sign that MD CHESSIE is capturing the population of children in care and the difference is not surprising because of the high

21 Treatment foster homes are identified as placement types of 'Treatment Foster Care,' and 'Treatment Foster Care (Private)' or living arrangement type 'Therapeutic Foster Care.'

22 Adoptive homes include placement types of Pre-finalized adoptive home and adoptive home and living arrangement types of '1507'='Adoption (Trial) ', '1508'='Adoptive Exchange Home ', '1510'='Agency Approved Adoptive Home ', '1526'='Independent Adoptive Home ', '1530'='Inter state-country Adoptive Home ', '8103'='ICPC Adoptive Home (incoming) '.

23 There were 163 instances (1.74%) where a child was identified as being in out-of-home care, but a placement or living arrangement for that child could not be identified. An additional 146 children (1.56%) were listed as having a placement type of 'Other.'

likelihood of different definitions in a hand count of when to count a child as in care (e.g., children were counted as in care on July 1, 2008 if they entered care on July 1, 2008, left care on July 1, 2008, or spent July 1, 2008 in care). To identify a child’s placement type a combination of the placement table and the living arrangement table were used from MD CHESSIE. Information in the hand count relied on both MD CHESSIE and caseworker knowledge.

### ***§5-1305.2. Multiple Placements in a One-Year Period***

<b>Maryland Measure</b>	<b>2007 Report<sup>24</sup></b>	<b>2008 Report (N=3,220)</b>
<b>Indicator §5-1305.2a:</b> The percentage of children with more than two out-of-home placements during a report year	Could not report	7.9%

<b>Federal Measure</b>	<b>2007 Report<sup>25</sup></b>	<b>2008 Report (N=3,220)</b>
<b>Indicator §5-1305.2:</b> Of all children who have been in foster care for less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, what percent have had no more than two placement settings.	Could not report	92.1%

The sample for this indicator includes children under age 18 who were in care for more than 8 days but less than 12 months from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008. Of these 3,220 children, 7.9% experienced more than 2 placements in the removal episode<sup>26</sup>. 92.1% of children experienced two or fewer placements, which is above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile score of 85.9% nationally<sup>27</sup>.

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24 Could not be reported in the 2007 report due to issues in the legacy data system.

25 Could not be reported in the 2007 report due to issues in the legacy data system.

26 There are several difficulties in calculating this measure from the existing MD CHESSIE system. First, there is a complicated relationship in MD CHESSIE between the placement identifier and the living arrangement type and consistent decisions had to be made regarding when a living arrangement supersedes a placement type and then whether the placement type and living arrangement should be considered the same placement or a placement move. Additionally, MD CHESSIE does not internally count the number of placements a child has experienced during a removal episode, therefore, requiring this calculation to be done external to the system.

27 Since this is a measure, and not a federal outcome, there is not a federal standard given for this measure, however scoring above the 75th is preferable.

### §5-1305.3. Placement with Siblings

	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=4,774)</b>
<b>Indicator §5-1305.3a:</b> Of the children in out-of-home care on July 1, 2008, what is “the percentage of children in custody of a local department or placement agency who have siblings <sup>28</sup> living in different placements?”	Could not report	37.0%
<b>Indicator §5-1305.3b:</b> Of the children in out-of-home care on July 1, 2008, what is “the percentage of children in custody of a local department or placement agency who have some or all siblings <sup>29</sup> placed together?”	Could not report	63.0%

Of the 9,363 children in out-of-home care on July 1, 2008, 51% (n=4,774) were identified as having a sibling residing in out-of-home care at the same time. For the purposes of this indicator, siblings were defined as any relationship between children identified as being full-siblings, half-siblings, or step-siblings; as well as any children sharing the same mother. Of these sibling groups, 33.95% (n=1,621) were placed with all of their siblings and 29.07% (n=1,388) were placed with some of their siblings. This means that 63.03% of children with siblings (n=3,009) were placed with some or all of their siblings and 36.97% (n=1,765) of children with siblings were not placed with siblings<sup>30</sup>.

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28 For the purposes of this indicator siblings were defined as any relationship between children identified as being either full-siblings, half-siblings, or step-siblings; and any children sharing the same mother.

29 For the purposes of this indicator siblings were defined as any relationship between children identified as being either full-siblings, half-siblings, or step-siblings; and any children sharing the same mother.

30 There are several difficulties in calculating this measure from any administrative data system, including MD CHESSIE. The identification and definition of what defines a sibling group is complicated. Sibling groups can be defined as children having a relationship identified with each other as siblings; children sharing the same mother; children sharing the same father; children being removed from the same home (known as fictive kin); or any combination of these groupings. A study using California administrative data found that the definition of siblings affects the outcomes of any measurement of siblings being placed together (Lery, Shaw, & Magruder, 2005).

## §5-1305.4. Exits from Out-Of-Home Care

<b>Indicator §5-1305.4a:</b> "The percentage of children who exit state custody..." by exit type July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008		
<b>Type of Exit</b>	<b>2007 Report<sup>31</sup> (N=3,774)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=3,364)</b>
Reunification	42.4%	34.4%
Adoption Finalized	17.5%	14.1%
Relative Guardian	14.4%	8.9%
Independent Living	.	17.8%
Other Exit	.	13.1%
Missing Exit Reason	.	6.2%
All Others	25.7 % <sup>32</sup>	5.5%

From July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, 3,364 children exited the Maryland Child Welfare system. Most exits were to reunification (n=1,158) as in previous years. A large number of children have exit reasons of 'Other' (n=441, 13.1%) and 'Missing' (n=210, 6.2%). Based on the trends seen from calendar year 2001 through calendar year 2005 reported in the table below it is likely that a number of these missing and other categories should actually be reunification, adoption, and guardian placements. In fact, the State Stat hand counts for this time period suggest that the number of children exiting to reunification (39.0%), adoption (15.6%), and guardianship (11.4%) should be higher than what has been identified and would be more in line with the trend from past years.

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31 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children exiting out-of-home care in calendar year 2005 (n=3,774).

32 The 25.7% includes 1.1% of exits to non-relative guardians.

The table below illustrates that the distribution of children exiting to reunification or a finalized adoption have remained relatively consistent over the past several years.

<b>Indicator §5-1303.4b:</b> "The percentage of children who exit state custody..." by exit type and Calendar Year of exit							
<b>Type of Exit</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>7/1/07-6/30/08</b>
Reunification	42.9	39.7	40.7	34.7	40.4	42.4	34.4
Adoption Finalized	16.6	20.8	22.0	19.5	19.6	17.5	14.1
Relative Guardian	21.7	19.5	15.9	15.1	16.0	14.4	8.9
Non-Relative Guardian	1.4	1.2	0.5	1.1	1.2	1.1	.
All Other*	17.4	18.8	20.9	29.7	22.7	24.6	42.6
* All Other includes missing data.							

### **§5-1305.1. Time to Exit from Out-Of-Home Care**

§5-1305.1 refers to the national standards for time periods to achieve permanency through reunification and adoption. Standards have not yet been defined for the national indicators, so comparisons are made to the national median to evaluate Maryland's performance (NRCCWDT, 2007).

### **Exits to Reunification**

	<b>2007 Report<sup>33</sup> (N=3,774)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=965)</b>
<b>Federal measure C1.1:</b> Of all children discharged from out-of-home care to reunification from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 who had been in out-of-home care for 8 days or longer, what percent were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of latest removal from home?	54.9%	50.9%

From July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 there were 1,158 children exiting to reunification. Of these exits, 193 were within 7 days of entry, leaving a total of 965 exits where the child had been in foster care for 8 days or longer. Of the 965 children in out-of-home care 8 days or longer, 50.9% (n=491) reunified within 12 months. The median national score on this measure is 69.9% with percentages ranging from 44.3 to 92.5%. Maryland's result of 50.9% is below the median value for this measure.

<sup>33</sup> The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children exiting out-of-home care in calendar year 2005 (n=3,774), 1,351 children fit the requirements for this measure.

	<b>2007 Report<sup>34</sup> (N=1,204)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=1,278)</b>
<b>Federal measure C1.3:</b> Of all children who entered foster care for the first time between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007, and who remained in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months from the date of latest removal from home?	28.0%	18.9%

From January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2007, 1,278 children under age 17 entered out-of-home care in Maryland for the first time. Of these children, 18.9% exited to reunification (n=241)<sup>35</sup>. This figure is below the value 28.0% reported in the last CWAA report. Two caveats to this report are worth noting: (1) a large number of children have exit reasons of 'Other' (n=441, 13.1%) and 'Missing' (n=210, 6.2%) and it is likely that many of these children should be coded as exiting to reunification; and (2) in order to follow the first entries for up to 12 months after initial entry the first entry period was January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2007 and included the period when Baltimore City was transitioning to the MD CHESSIE system. These caveats could account for differences between the two measures. The national median on this indicator is 39.4% with percentages ranging from 17.7 to 68.9%. Maryland's result of 18.9% places it near the bottom of the range of first entries reunifying within 12 months.

## Exits to Adoption

	<b>2007 Report<sup>36</sup> (N=519)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=476)</b>
<b>Federal measure C2.1:</b> Of all children who were discharged from foster care to adoption during the period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, what percent were discharged in less than 24 months from the most recent placement date?	19.9%	25.4%

Of the 476 children exiting to adoption, 25.4% (n=121) exited care within 24 months of their removal episode start date<sup>37</sup>. The range for this federal measure is 6.4 to 74.9% with

34 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children enter out-of-home care in the last six months of calendar year 2004 (n=1,204).

35 Reunification can include return to parents or other relatives, and is defined using exit reasons of return to parent, court ordered return to parents, and custody and guardianship to relative (NCRCCWDT, 2007).

36 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children exiting out-of-home care in calendar year 2005 to an adoptive placement (n=519).

37 In Maryland, when a child is placed into an adoptive placement an administrative process known as 'breaking the link' is undertaken. This process requires a worker to end the prior removal episode and open a new removal episode with a new client identifier for the child. This makes the process of identifying the full time from entry to exits for children being adopted difficult. Based on discussions with SSA staff, a method of identifying instances where these links had been broken was implemented and used to examine children moving through the Maryland child welfare system and understand the time from entry to exit for children who leave to a finalized adoption.

a median of 26.8%. Maryland is below the national median for this measure.

	<b>2007 Report<sup>38</sup></b>	<b>2008 Report (N=4,074)</b>
<b>Federal measure C2.3.</b> Of all children in foster care on July 1, 2007 who were in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, what percent were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption by June 30, 2008?	Could not Report	2.6%

This measure examines all children ages 1-17 in care on July 1, 2007 who had been in care for at least 17 continuous months. The base number for this measure excludes any child who exited to another permanent placement prior to the end of the 12 month period. Of the 4,074 children who met the criteria for inclusion, 2.6% (n=106) exited to adoption within 12 months of the start of the period. As previously identified, a number of exits were found to have "missing" or "other" as the exit type and would likely increase the results of this measure. The national range for this measure is 2.4 to 26.2 with a median of 20.2%. Maryland is well below the national median for this measure.

### Exits to a permanent home before age 18

	<b>2007 Report<sup>39</sup> (N=1,351)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=215)</b>	
<b>Federal measure C3.2:</b> Of all children who were discharged from out-of-home care from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 who were legally free <sup>40</sup> for adoption at the time of discharge, what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday?	Exits to Permanency including Exit type Other	Exits to Permanency	Exits to Permanency including Exit type Other
	90.4%	81.9%	90.7%

Federal measure C3.2 assesses the movement towards permanency for children who have been identified as legally free for adoption. Children were considered legally free if there was an indication that parental rights had been terminated<sup>40</sup> for both parents or if the child was currently in an adoptive placement. Permanent homes were defined two ways: (1) as finalized adoption, reunification and guardianship; and (2) as finalized adoption, reunification, guardianship and the category of Other exit.

215 children were identified as legally free for adoption at exit between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. 81.9% of these children (n=176) exited to permanency prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. If the "other exit" type is included as a permanent exit type the percentage of

38 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children exiting out-of-home care in calendar year 2005 (n=3,774), 1,351 children fit the requirements for this measure.

39 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on calendar year 2005 (n=3,774), 656 children fit the requirements for this measure as being listed as legally free.

40 A child was identified as legally free only when there was an indication of the termination of parental rights (TPR) for both parents. If a single TPR existed for the mother, but not for the father, that child was not included in the calculation.

children exiting to permanency increases to 90.7% (n=195). The federal guidelines indicate a national median of 96.8%, with percentages ranging from 84.9 to 100% of children achieving permanency prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Maryland falls below the national median on this indicator.

	<b>2007 Report<sup>41</sup> (N=5,356)</b>	<b>2008 Report (N=4,748)</b>
<b>Federal measure C3.1:</b> Of all children who were in foster care for 24 months or longer on July 1, 2007, what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday by the end of the one year period (June 30, 2008)?	8.4%	17.8%

There were 4,748 children in care on July 1, 2007 who were under the age of 18 and had been in out-of-home care for 24 months or longer. Of these children, 17.8% (n=849) were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and by the end of the calendar year. Permanent homes are defined as exit to reunification, guardianship, and finalized adoption.

Although Maryland showed significant improvement in this measure between the first report using 2005 information and this report (8.9% to 17.8%), the results are still below the federal guidelines for this indicator. The federal guidelines for this measure list a national median of 25% with a range of values from 8.1 to 35.3%. Maryland is below the national median.

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41 The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children in care on January 1, 2005 who were under the age 18 (n=5,356).

## §5-1305.8. Re-Entry into Out-of-home Care

Maryland Measure	2007 Report <sup>42</sup> (N=5,955)	2008 Report (N=1,388)
<b>Indicator §5-1305.8a:</b> "The number [percent] of children who are recommitted to the Department within 12 months of release from commitment to the Department" (All exits between January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007)	11.4%	10.8%

Federal Measure	2007 Report	2008 Report (N=895)
<b>Federal Measure C1.4:</b> "The number [percent] of children who are recommitted to the Department within 12 months of release for exit reason of reunification from commitment to the Department" (All exits to Reunification between January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007)	Not reported	8.4%

The sample for this indicator included all children under age 17 who exited care between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007. Of the 1,388 children, 10.8% (n=150) reentered out-of-home care within 12 months<sup>43</sup>.

Whereas the Maryland measure looks at all exits, the federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) measure focuses exclusively on exits from out-of-home care to reunification. In order to follow the federal measure (indicator §5-1305.8b), this analysis examines children exiting to reunification between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007. Of these 895 children, 8.4% (n=75) reentered out-of-home care within 12 months of their exit. The federal range of values for this measure is from 1.6 to 29.8 percent with a median value of 15.0% and a 75<sup>th</sup> percentile value of 9.0%. Maryland's result of 8.4% is better than the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for this measure.

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<sup>42</sup> The time period for the measure reported in the 2007 CWAA report was based on children exiting care in calendar year 2004 (n=5,955).

<sup>43</sup> The reentry occurred between 2 and 366 days after the initial exit.

### **§5-1305.6. Number of Available Foster and Treatment Foster Homes**

<b>Indicator §5-1305.6: "Number of Available Foster and Treatment Foster Homes"</b>	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report</b>
Public foster and pre-adoptive homes that are active at the end of October 2008	Could not report	3,078
Private Therapeutic Foster Care Homes that have a contract with DHR and are active at the end of October 2008.	Could not report	2,159

The number of public foster homes was assessed using the November State Stat reports that list the active foster homes at the end of the month of October. The count of private therapeutic foster care providers was reported by DHR/SSA through an MD CHESSIE report from October 14, 2008. A preliminary analysis of the providers listed in MD CHESSIE validated the number of available public foster homes listed in measure §5-1305.6<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> The number of public regular foster homes was 3,062 using the MD CHESSIE extract. The difference between the two numbers relates to the dates that each report was compiled. The extract used for the CWAA report came from early October, the report used in 5-1305.6 is based on November data.

## §5-1305.7. Regulation of Foster and Treatment Foster Homes

<b>Indicator §5-1305.7:</b> "The percentage foster homes and kinship care homes in which the following have been conducted according to regulation:"		
	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report</b>
	<b>LSR Sample Data<sup>45</sup></b>	<b>MD CHESSIE (N=3,939)</b>
a. required criminal background checks	91.7%	Cannot report
b. initial fire safety inspection	85.7%	77.0%
c. initial health and sanitation inspection	85.7%	76.5%
d. annual reconsideration for compliance with standards for safety and quality	95.8%	31.2%
<b>NOTE:</b> The Local Supervisor Review (LSR) sample data provides supervisory ratings of a small number of cases reviewed for quality assurance purposes. The MD CHESSIE % column provides the percent of cases for which the fields required to complete this analysis are populated.		

Information about foster home regulation is not completely populated in the MD CHESSIE fields related to provider approvals. Although MD CHESSIE has the capacity to collect this information no data could be found in the electronic related to required criminal background checks, and 68.8% of the providers did not have information related to the status of the annual reconsiderations.

Based on the MD CHESSIE data that is available, of the 3,939 foster and kinship homes, 77.0% (n=3,030) have evidence of a fire and safety inspection<sup>46</sup>, 76.5% (n=3,012) have evidence of a health and sanitation inspection<sup>47</sup>, and 31.2% (n=1,228) have evidence of an annual reconsideration<sup>48</sup>.

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45 The initial Child Welfare Performance Indicators Workgroup determined that for the first CWAA report there were no statewide data systems able to report on these indicators. The Local Supervisory Review was used to estimate the percent of homes with necessary checks and approvals.

46 Indication of inspection is the presence of a date in the fire inspection field.

47 Indication of inspection is the presence of a date in the health and sanitation field.

48 Indication of reconsideration is the presence of a code in the reconsideration stat field.

# §5-1306. Addressing the well-being of children in out-of-home care

The fourth set of indicators concern state efforts to address the health, mental health, education and well-being of children committed to the Department. The Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006 includes the following items:

1. Comprehensive assessments,
2. Health examinations, and
3. School enrollment.

These items are process measures designed to assess whether children are being linked to available resources (school and health care) in a timely manner. SSA and local department staff have been focused on making sure that data elements affecting payments and federal reporting in MD CHESSIE are complete and accurate. Whereas elements related to removal, placement, living arrangement and exits have been improving, some areas of the electronic record have yet to be fully populated. Therefore, considerable missing data is present in the following measures.

*The MD CHESSIE results are presented as a means of gauging data completeness and cannot be used to adequately assess system performance on these measures.*

## §5-1306.1. Comprehensive Assessments

<b>Indicator §5-1306.1b:</b> "The percentage of children entering out-of-home placement between January 1, 2008 and June 30, 2008 who received a comprehensive assessment in compliance with federal regulations for the early and periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment program within 60 days of entering placement"		
	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report (N = 1,558)</b>
<b>Missing Data</b>	Could not report	829
<b>Cases with Complete Data</b>	Could not report	729
<b>MD CHESSIE - EPSDT<sup>49</sup></b>	Could not report	7.5%
<b>MD CHESSIE – Comprehensive Health Screening<sup>50</sup></b>	Could not report	18.5%
<b>MD CHESSIE – Health Screening<sup>51</sup></b>	Could not report	84.1%

49 EPSDT is identified as an examination type in MD CHESSIE of '7833' EPSD/ Healthy Child.

50 A comprehensive health screening is identified as an examination type in MD CHESSIE of '3256' Comprehensive Health Examination.

51 Health screening is identified as any health examination other than Sexual Abuse screening.

The sample for this indicator includes all children entering care between January 1, 2008 and June 30, 2008. Of these 1,558 children, 46.8% (n=729) had a link to the table containing health information. The estimates provided here are based on data with over 50% of cases missing relevant information. Measures must be interpreted with caution.

According to MD CHESSIE, 84.1% (n=613) of all children entering care who had information related to health screenings had a health screening within 60 days.

### **§5-1306.2. Health Examinations**

<b>Indicator §5-1306.2a:</b> "The percentage of eligible children entering foster care or kinship care who have been examined by a medical provider within [5] days of entry"		
	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report</b>
		<b>Total Entries (N=1,558)</b>
<b>Missing Data</b>	Could not report	829
<b>Cases with Complete Data</b>	Could not report	729
<b>MD CHESSIE – Health Screening<sup>52</sup></b>	Could not report	57.3%

The sample for this indicator is all children entering care between January 1, 2008 and June 30, 2008. Of these 1,558 children, 46.8% (n=729) had a link to the table containing health information. The estimates provided here are based on data with over 50% of cases missing relevant information. Measures must be interpreted with caution.

Of all children entering care where there is health information available, 57.3% (n=418) received some form of health screening within 5 days of entry.

<b>Indicator §5-1306.2b:</b> Of all children entering care between January 1, 2008 and June 30, 2008 "the percentage of eligible children entering foster care or kinship care who have been...	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report</b>
		<b>Total Entries (N=1,558)</b>
<b>Missing Data</b>	Could not report	829
<b>Cases with Complete Data</b>	Could not report	729
...examined by a medical provider within 10 days of entry into out-of-home placement"	Could not report	70.8%
... have a designated health care provider within 10 days of entry into out-of-home placement"	Could not report	61.6%

Of all children entering care, 33.1% (n=516) received some form of health screening within

<sup>52</sup> Health screening is identified as any health examination.

10 days of entry. Of all children entering care where there is health information available, 70.8% (n=516) received some form of health screening within 10 days of entry. Of all children entering care where there is health information available, 61.6% (n=449) were seen by a provider<sup>53</sup> within 10 days of entry.

### **§5-1306.3. School Enrollment**

<b>Indicator §5-1306.3:</b> "The percentage of school-aged children in out-of-home placements on January 1, 2008 enrolled in school"		
	<b>2007 Report</b>	<b>2008 Report</b>
		<b>Total Entries (N=6,750)</b>
<b>Missing Data</b>	Could not report	1,309
<b>Cases with Complete Data</b>	Could not report	5,441 <sup>54</sup>
<b>MD CHESSIE – Any school information<sup>55</sup></b>	Could not Report	98.2%
<b>MD CHESSIE – Current school information<sup>56</sup></b>		44.6%

The sample for this indicator includes 6,750 children in out-of-home care on January 1, 2008. 80.6% (n=5,441) had records on the education files. Of all school-aged children in care on January 1, 2008, 98.2% (n=5,425) had school information in the record, and 44.6% (n=2,425) had information related to the 2007-2008 school year in their records.

53 A designated provider is defined for these purposes as any physician that is listed by name in the record.

54 Non-missing is a subset of the total children in care. There were 6,750 school aged children in care on January 1, 2008 and 5,441 of these children had records on the education file.

55 Any school information means that there is information related to the child being in school at some time.

56 Current school information suggests that the child is listed as being enrolled in school during the 2007-2008 school year.

# Measuring Child Welfare Performance in Maryland

The UM/SSW faculty and staff compiling data noted several measurement issues with the performance indicators defined in the Child Welfare Accountability Act. Measurement issues are to be expected at this early stage of development because identifying producible and meaningful performance indicators is a long-term process. The first stage of the process is to identify concerns about existing indicators and then it is possible to develop processes to address these concerns. This section of the report outlines some of the issues with existing performance indicators and suggests recommendations for improvement.

## *Discussion of Existing Performance Indicators*

**Performance indicators do not reflect all the critical decision points along a child's trajectory in child and family services.** Existing performance indicators focus on child maltreatment reports and then skip to placement outcomes without first examining placement decisions. Now that Maryland has fully transitioned from the legacy data system to MD CHESSIE, UM/SSW and DHR will work together, as provided for in §5-1309, to develop meaningful indicators accounting for the full breadth of child welfare services and provide a more complete picture of outcomes for children in the child welfare system.

**Measurement is inconsistent across indicators.** The wording in the Child Welfare Accountability Act is inconsistent among measures. For example, some measures call for results presented as numbers, while others call for percentages, and still others reflect the incidence. Additionally, relevant time periods, such as the number of months without a recurrence of abuse or neglect, change with each indicator making consistent interpretation difficult. Additionally, the interpretation of indicators can be challenging when the directionality of measures is not consistent - a higher figure is considered a positive outcome on some indicators, but a negative outcome on others. UM/SSW staff therefore modified the existing measures to make the reporting of the indicators in the Act comparable to each other and more consistent with federal measures.

**Point-in-time indicators compare different populations of children at report, placement, and exit.** While it can be informative to measure number and types of reports, placements and exits, it is difficult to track improvements over time. Both cross-sectional and exit cohort measures are problematic for outcome measures designed to examine changes over time because children do not have an equal probability of being in the sample (Courtney, Needell & Wulczyn, 2003; Courtney, Needell & Wulczyn, 2004).

**Prospective measures are preferable to measure child welfare outcomes.** Retrospective measures are inherently biased because children have different probabilities of being selected for these types of measures and they fail to provide the depth of uniform information needed for program improvement.

As an example, consider federal composite one, measure one (included as part of §5-1305 Permanency and stability of children in out of home care): "*Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification, who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home?*" There is a danger that improving system performance by moving children who have been in care for extended periods of time toward reunification would cause this measure to show declining performance. This type of negative result would occur because, when more children who have been in care for extended periods move to reunification the denominator becomes larger, while the numerator [reunification in less than 12 months] stays flat leading to decreased performance on the measure. A prospective analysis would not suffer from this bias because the base population would be constant--children entering care during a specific period of time.

## ***Recommendations for Improvements***

**Continue to develop MD [CHESSIE. MD](#)** CHESSIE will allow all federal measures and indicators to be examined using population-level data that is not subject to sampling bias. SSA is making tremendous strides in developing the MD CHESSIE system. It is imperative that the energy and focus that has been driving the development and improvement of the MD CHESSIE continue. As MD CHESSIE improves, the state will increase its capacity to routinely and effectively report on the outputs and outcomes of Maryland child welfare services.

**Continue to allow flexibility in the reporting of performance indicators.** The core set of performance indicators should match the federally-mandated performance indicators. By using the federal measures to track system progress (in conjunction with additional measures discussed above) Maryland may monitor progress towards achieving improvement goals, make mid-course corrections on system performance as necessary, and have a fuller understanding of the federal CFSR measures and program improvement plan. Measuring outcomes in the same way as Federal administrators will hold Maryland accountable and provide the most efficient way to prepare for re-evaluation by the USDHHS, Children's Bureau.

**Track entry cohorts over time.** Following one population of children and youth through their child welfare experiences is the single best, least biased method of measuring service receipt and outcomes (Wulczyn, 2007; Zeller & Gamble, 2007). Entry cohort analyses are being successfully utilized in Maryland to examine welfare service utilization through a partnership between SSA and UM and should be expanded in the future. It is in Maryland's best interest to utilize the power available through the MD CHESSIE system to examine the trajectory of children through the child welfare system in a prospective manner. A prospective analysis will allow Maryland to follow children from report through investigation, to in-home or out-of-home child and family services, to the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being. Examining children's trajectory through the various levels of child welfare services is the best way to understand the effects of services on children and families. As the MD CHESSIE system becomes more populated with case and service characteristics, it will become a very powerful tool to measure overall system performance.

**Explore differential outcomes for subpopulations.** Child welfare research has demonstrated differential outcomes for unique subgroups within the child welfare population. To determine whether outcomes are equal for all children and families, performance indicators should be stratified by such child demographics as age at entry, race/ethnicity, and local department (Wulczyn, 2007). Additionally, these measures should be made available to jurisdictions focusing on the population of children they currently serve. This exploration across subpopulations will also allow the state and local jurisdictions to examine issues pertaining to racial disproportionality and disparity in and across the Maryland child welfare system.

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## Appendix A: Summary of Maryland Performance Indicators

Child Welfare Accountability Act Performance Indicators		2007 Results (CY2005 <sup>57</sup> )	2008 Results (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008)
<b>§5-1303. Child abuse and neglect</b>			
1.	a. The recurrence within 12 months of child abuse or neglect among victims of indicated abuse or neglect	9.0%	9.0%
	b. The recurrence within 6 months of child abuse or neglect among victims of indicated abuse or neglect	5.1%	5.7%
	c. The lack of recurrence within 6 months of child abuse or neglect among victims of indicated abuse or neglect	Not reported	94.3%
2.	The percentage of screened out reports of child abuse or neglect that are documented as reviewed by a supervisor	Could not report	99.8%
3.	The incidence of child abuse or neglect for a child who, in the prior 12 months, was not removed from the home following an investigation that found indicated or unsubstantiated abuse or neglect	9.0%	7.8%
4.	The percentage of child protective services investigations that are initiated and completed in accordance with §5-706:		
	a. Investigations initiated within 5 days	Could not report	88.2%
	b. Completed within 10 days	5.6%	12.1%
	Completed within 30 days	26.9%	44.7%
	Completed within 60 days	70.5%	80.4%
5.	For all indicated and substantiated cases of abuse and neglect, the percentage of children who:		
	a. receive family preservation services; and	7.4%	23.1%
	b. are able to remain safely in their own homes for 18 months after receiving family preservation services	75.2%	82.8%
	c. Do not receive FPS & remain safely in their homes for 18 months	83.5%	91.1%
6.	Any other indicators adopted by the Secretary under §5-1302		

<sup>57</sup> This time period was used as a guide in performing all measures with the administrative data systems. Please see the text of the individual indicators for more details.

Child Welfare Accountability Act Performance Indicators		2007 Results (CY2005 <sup>58</sup> )	2008 Results (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008)
<b>§5-1304. Protecting children in out-of-home care from abuse and neglect</b>			
<b>1.</b>	The incidence of indicated or unsubstantiated findings of child abuse or neglect of children in the custody of a local department, or a placement agency, for placements:		
	a. Using federal definition of caregivers for abuse in care, % of children in out-of-home placements	0.63% <sup>1</sup>	0.21%
	b. % of children in out-of-home placements	2.7%	2.3%
<b>2.</b>	The incidence of indicated or unsubstantiated findings of child abuse or neglect within 12 months following the release of the child committed to the department	5.1%	6.2%
<b>3.</b>	Any other indicators adopted by the Secretary under §5-1302		
<b>§5-1305. Permanency and stability of children in out-of-home care</b>			
<b>1.</b>	The percentage of children who exit foster care within time periods consistent with federal national standards with a breakdown by each standard:		
	<i>CI.1</i> Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification <i>during the period under review</i> who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home?	54.9%	50.9%
	<i>CI.3</i> Of all children who entered foster care for the first time in the 6-month period just prior to <i>the period under review</i> , and who remained in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months from the date of latest removal from home?	28.0%	18.9%
	<i>C2.1</i> Of all children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption <i>during the period under review</i> , what percent were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home?		25.4%
	Pre-adoptive placement	19.9%	
	<i>C2.3</i> Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of <i>the period under review</i> , and who were in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, what percent were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption by the last day of <i>the period under review</i> ?	Could not report	2.6%

<sup>58</sup> This time period was used as a guide in performing all measures with the administrative data systems. Please see the text of the individual indicators for more details.

<b>Child Welfare Accountability Act Performance Indicators</b>		<b>2007 Results (CY2005<sup>59</sup>)</b>	<b>2008 Results (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008)</b>
<b>C3.1</b>	Of all children who were in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of <i>the period under review</i> , what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday and by the end of the fiscal year?	8.4%	17.8%
<b>C3.2</b>	Of all children who were discharged from foster care in <i>the period under review</i> who were legally free for adoption at the time of discharge, what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday?	90.4%	81.9%
	Of all children who were discharged from foster care in <i>the period under review</i> who were legally free for adoption at the time of discharge, what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday? ( <i>including Other exit as Permanent</i> )		90.7%
<b>2. a.</b>	The percentage of children with more than two out-of-home placements during a report year	Could not report	7.9%
<b>b.</b>	C4.1 Of all children who have been in foster care for less than 12 months from the date of latest removal from home, what percent have had no more than two placement settings?	Could not report	92.1%
<b>3. a.</b>	The percentage of children in the custody of a local department or placement agency who have siblings living in different placements	Could not report	37.0%
<b>b.</b>	The percentage of children in the custody of a local department or placement agency who are placed with some or all of their siblings	Could not report	63.0%
<b>4. a.</b>	The percentage of children who exit foster care by exit type:		
	reunified with a parent or guardian	42.4%	34.4%
	adopted	17.5%	14.1%
	Relative Guardian	14.4%	8.9%
	Non-relative guardian	1.1%	
	All Other	24.6%	42.6% <sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> This time period was used as a guide in performing all measures with the administrative data systems. Please see the text of the individual indicators for more details.

<sup>60</sup> This is the sum of exits to all other types of exit including missing.

<b>Child Welfare Accountability Act Performance Indicators</b>		<b>2007 Results (CY2005<sup>61</sup>)</b>	<b>2008 Results (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008)</b>
<b>5.</b>	The percent of children in an out-of-home placement living on July 1, 2008 in:		
	Trial Home Visits	3.7%	4.1%
	kinship care homes	33.3%	21.2%
	restricted foster homes	5.6%	8.7%
	regular foster homes	16.9%	17.0%
	treatment foster homes	14.7%	21.0%
	group homes	13.9%	17.0%
	adoptive homes	1.7%	2.7%
	other placements	10.2%	8.3%
<b>6.</b>	The number of foster homes available for children in the custody of a local department, or a placement agency	Could not report	3,078
	The number of treatment foster homes available for children in the custody of a local department, or a placement agency	Could not report	2,159
<b>7.</b>	The percentage of foster homes and kinship care homes in which the following have been conducted according to regulation:	LSR	MD CHESSIE
	a. required criminal background checks	91.7%	Could not report
	b. fire and safety inspections	85.7%	77.0%
	c. Health and safety checks	85.7%	76.5%
	d. reconsiderations, as applicable	95.8%	31.2%
	e. any other safety regulations adopted by regulation.		
<b>8.</b>	The number of children who are recommitted to the Department within 12 months of release from commitment to the Department	11.4%	10.8%
	<b>CI.4</b> Of all children exiting foster care to reunification in <i>the period under review</i> , what percent re-entered foster care in less than 12 months?	Did not report	8.4%
<b>9.</b>	Any other indicators adopted by the Secretary under §5-1302		

61 This time period was used as a guide in performing all measures with the administrative data systems. Please see the text of the individual indicators for more details and specific time frames.

Child Welfare Accountability Act Performance Indicators (CY2005 <sup>62</sup> )		2007 Results	2008 Results (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008)
<b>§5-1306. Effectiveness of efforts to address the health, mental health, education and well-being of a child committed to the Department</b>			
<b>1.</b>	The percentage of children in out-of-home placements who received a comprehensive assessment in compliance with federal regulations for the Early and Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program within 60 days of entering out-of-home placement		
<b>a.</b>	MD CHESSIE: Identified Early and Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment service within 60 days of entering out-of-home placement	Could not report	7.5% <sup>63,64</sup>
<b>b.</b>	MD CHESSIE: Identified Comprehensive Health Screening service within 60 days of entering out-of-home placement	Could not report	18.5% <sup>63,64</sup>
<b>c.</b>	MD CHESSIE: Identified Health Screening service within 60 days of entering out-of-home placement	Could not report	84.1% <sup>63,64</sup>
<b>2.</b>	<b>a.</b> The percentage of eligible children entering foster care or kinship care who:		
	i. have been examined by a medical provider within 10 days of entry into out-of-home placement	Could not report	70.8% <sup>63,64</sup>
	ii. have a designated health care provider within 10 days of entry into out-of-home placement	Could not report	61.6% <sup>63,64</sup>
	<b>b.</b> The percentage of eligible children entering foster care or kinship care who have been examined by a medical provider within [5] days of entry	Could not report	57.3% <sup>63,64</sup>
<b>3.</b>	<b>a.</b> The percentage of school-aged children in out-of-home placements enrolled in school	Could not report	98.2% <sup>63,65</sup>
	<b>b.</b> The percentage of school-aged children in out-of-home placements enrolled in school within 5 days of entry into out-of-home placement	Could not report	44.6% <sup>63,65</sup>
<b>4.</b>	Any other indicators adopted by the Secretary under §5-1302		

62 This time period was used as a guide in performing all measures with the administrative data systems. Please see the text of the individual indicators for more details.

63 *The MD CHESSIE results are presented as a means of gauging data completeness and cannot be used to adequately assess system performance on these measures.*

64 Information was available on 46.8% of cases.

65 Information was available on 57.3% of cases.