
BILL NO: Senate Bill 299
TITLE: Human Services - Trauma-Informed Care - Commission and Training
COMMITTEE: Finance
HEARING DATE: February 11, 2021
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Senate Bill 299 would establish the Commission on Trauma-Informed Care to coordinate a statewide initiative to prioritize the trauma-responsive and trauma-informed delivery of State services that impact children, youth, families, and older adults. The Women's Law Center of Maryland supports this effort as so much has been learned about the effects of trauma and our State agencies should be educated and informed, and they should develop policies using trauma-informed Care (TIC).

The experience of trauma has widespread impact on the lives of those we serve in most or many of our direct representation projects, including our Protection Order Advocacy and Representation Projects (POARP), our Collateral Legal Assistance for Survivors Project (CLAS) and our Multi-Ethnic Domestic Violence Project (MEDOVI). Trauma can lead to or exacerbate mental illness, substance use, and physical health conditions. In a truly integrated, whole health system of care, effective treatment must involve addressing the impact of trauma. By establishing a trauma-Informed Care Commission, state agencies will begin to understand the impact trauma has played in Maryland citizens' lives, and they can develop processes to incorporate the trauma into their policies and approaches.

One example: Implementing TIC requires a shift in philosophy and clinical approach to assessment and treatment. Asking "what happened to you?" not "what's wrong with you?" is a simple example of this adjustment that requires staff to learn new practices and techniques in working with clients.

Therefore, the Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. strongly SUPPORTS Senate Bill 299.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.