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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
149th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 181

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 16 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO RESPONSES TO CHILD ABUSE AND
NEGLECT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

1 Section 1. Amend § 901, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and
2 insertions as shown by underline as follows:

3 § 901. Purpose.

4 The child welfare policy of this State shall serve to advance the best interests and secure the safety of the child,
5 while preserving the family unit whenever the safety of the child is not jeopardized. The child welfare policy of this State
6 extends to all child victims, whether victims of ~~intra-familial~~intrafamilial or ~~extra-familial~~extrafamilial child abuse and
7 neglect. To that end this chapter, among other things, does all of the following:

8 (1) Provides for comprehensive, multidisciplinary investigative and protective services for abused and
9 neglected ~~children~~children.

10 (2) Mandates that reports of child abuse or neglect be made to the appropriate ~~authorities~~and authorities.

11 (3) Requires various agencies in Delaware's child protection system to work together to ensure the safety of
12 children who are the subject of reports of abuse or neglect by conducting coordinated multidisciplinary investigations
13 where required, judicial proceedings and family assessments, and by providing necessary services.

14 (4) ~~This chapter also provides~~Provides for the protection of children in facilities or organizations primarily
15 concerned with child welfare and care that are required to be licensed under Delaware law by requiring the Delaware
16 Department of Justice to notify any such facility where an employee of, or other person associated with, the facility has
17 been charged with or convicted of an offense involving child sexual abuse.

18 Section 2. Amend § 902, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and
19 insertions as shown by underline as follows:

20 § 902. Definitions.

21 As used in this chapter:

(1) "Abuse" or "abused child" ~~is~~ means as defined in § 901 of Title 10.

(2) "Baby" ~~shall mean~~ means a child not more than 14 days old, except that for hospitals and their employees and volunteers, "baby" ~~shall mean~~ means a child reasonably believed to be not more than 14 days old.

(3) "Child" ~~shall mean~~ means any person who has not reached that person's own eighteenth birthday.

(4) "Child Protection Registry" or "Registry" means a collection of information as described in subchapter II of this chapter about persons who have been substantiated for abuse or neglect as provided in subchapter II of this chapter or who were substantiated between August 1, 1994, and February 1, 2003.

(5) "Child welfare proceeding" means any Family Court proceeding and subsequent appeal therefrom involving custody, visitation, guardianship, termination of parental rights, adoption or other related petitions that involve a dependent, neglected or abused child or a child at risk of same as determined by the Family Court.

(6) "Children's advocacy center" means a child forensic interviewing center that employs best practices by applying and adhering to nationally recognized standards, and assists in the response to multidisciplinary cases.

~~(6)(7)~~ "Conviction" or "convicted" means entry of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, regardless of whether the plea was subsequently discharged or dismissed under the first offenders domestic violence diversion program pursuant to § 1024 of Title 10, or under the first offenders controlled substances diversion program pursuant to § 4767 of this title, or of a Robinson plea, or of a probation before judgment discharge without judgment of conviction notwithstanding the provisions of § 4218(g) of Title 11, or a finding of guilt after trial, or a finding of not guilty after trial as a result of the defense of mental disease or defect pursuant to Title 11, or adjudication of delinquency for conduct which if committed by an adult, would constitute a crime; or "conviction" or "convicted" under similar proceedings of another state, territory or jurisdiction.

(8) "Death" means the loss of life of a child.

~~(7)(9)~~ "Department" ~~shall mean~~ means the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.

~~(8)(10)~~ "Director" ~~shall mean~~ means the Director of the Division of Family Services of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.

~~(9)(11)~~ "Division" ~~shall mean~~ means the Division of Family Services of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.

(12) "Extrafamilial child abuse or neglect" means child abuse or neglect committed by an individual who is not a member of the child's family or household, but does not include institutional child abuse or neglect.

~~(10)(13)~~ "Family assessment and services" ~~shall mean~~ means a case management approach by the Division of Family Services that provides for a prompt assessment of a child and the child's family and the circumstances of the

reported incident,~~(including~~including the known history of the child and/or the alleged ~~perpetrator)~~perpetrator, when there has been a report to the Division that the child was a victim of abuse or neglect, or at risk of maltreatment by a person responsible for that child's care, custody or control. Family assessment and services shall be used in conjunction with the investigation approach defined in paragraph ~~(13)~~(19) of this section but may not supplant it in circumstances which require an investigation. The family assessment response shall focus on the integrity and preservation of the family and shall assess the status of the child and the family in terms of the risk of abuse and neglect and, if necessary, plan and provide for the provision of community-based services to reduce the risk and to otherwise support the family.

~~(11)~~(14) "Good faith" shall be presumed in the absence of evidence of malice or wilful misconduct.

(15) "Human trafficking" means as defined in § 787 of Title 11.

(16) "Institutional child abuse or neglect" means as defined in § 901 of Title 10.

(17) "Intrafamilial child abuse or neglect" means as defined in § 901 of Title 10.

~~(12)~~(18) "Internal information system" ~~shall mean~~means a system of maintaining information related to all reports of abuse, neglect, investigations, family assessments, services and other relevant information.

~~(13)~~(19) "Investigation" ~~shall mean~~means the collection of evidence in response to a report of abuse, neglect, or risk of maltreatment by a person responsible for that child's care, custody or control in order to determine if a child has been abused, neglected, or is at risk of maltreatment. The Division shall develop protocols for its investigations that focus on ensuring the well-being and safety of the child. The Division may conduct an investigation in response to any report of abuse, neglect, or risk of maltreatment but shall conduct an investigation as enumerated under § 906(e)(3) of this title.

~~(14)~~(20) "Investigation Coordinator" ~~shall mean a person~~means an attorney licensed to practice law in this State employed by the Office of the Child Advocate, who is authorized to independently track each reported case of alleged child abuse or neglect within the Department's internal information system and who is responsible for monitoring each reported case involving the death of, serious physical injury to, or allegations of sexual abuse of a child from inception to final criminal and civil disposition.

(21) "Multidisciplinary case" means a comprehensive investigation by the multidisciplinary team for any child abuse or neglect report involving death, serious physical injury, physical injury, human trafficking of a child, torture or sexual abuse, which if true, would constitute a criminal violation against a child, or an attempt to commit any such crime, even if no crime is ever charged.

(22) "Multidisciplinary team" means a combination of the following entities as required by law to investigate or monitor multidisciplinary cases: the Division, the appropriate law enforcement agency, the Department of Justice,

and the Investigation Coordinator. "Multidisciplinary team" may also include others deemed necessary for an effective multidisciplinary response, such as medical personnel, the Division of Forensic Science, a children's advocacy center, the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services, mental health experts, and the child's attorney.

(15)(23) "Multidisciplinary tracking system" ~~shall mean~~means an electronic system which the Investigation Coordinator utilizes to track and monitor each case involving the death of, or serious injury to, a child, or allegations of sexual abuse of a child, from inception to final criminal and civil disposition.

(16)(24) "Near death" means a child in serious or critical condition as a result of child abuse or neglect as certified by a physician.

(17)(25) "Neglect" ~~is~~means as defined in § 901 of Title 10.

(18)(26) "Physical injury" ~~is~~means as defined in § ~~222-1100~~ of Title 11.

(19)(27) "Report" ~~shall mean~~means the communication of an allegation of child abuse or neglect to the Division pursuant to § 903 or § 905 of this ~~title~~title.

(20)(28) "Serious physical injury" ~~is~~means as defined in § ~~222-1100~~ of Title 11.

(21)(29) "Sexual abuse" ~~is~~means as defined in § 901 of Title 10.

(22)(30) "Special Investigator" ~~shall mean~~means a Division employee, appointed by the Secretary, who performs abuse and neglect investigations and possesses additional qualifications and authority as defined by § 9016 of Title 29.

(23)(31) "Substantiation" means a finding by a preponderance of the evidence that abuse or neglect has occurred.

(24)(32) "Those responsible for the care, custody and control of the child" or "care, custody and control" ~~is~~means as defined in § 901 of Title 10.

Section 3. Amend § 903, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 903. Reports required.

(a) Any person, agency, organization or entity who knows or in good faith suspects child abuse or neglect shall make a report in accordance with § 904 of this title. For purposes of this section, "person" shall include, but shall not be limited to, any physician, any other person in the healing arts including any person licensed to render services in medicine, osteopathy or dentistry, any intern, resident, nurse, school employee, social worker, psychologist, medical examiner, hospital, health care institution, the Medical Society of Delaware or law-enforcement agency. In addition to and not in lieu of reporting to the Division of Family Services, any such person may also give oral or written notification of said

knowledge or suspicion to any police officer who is in the presence of such person for the purpose of rendering assistance to the child in question or investigating the cause of the child's injuries or condition.

(b) The Division shall inform any person required to report under this section of the person's right to obtain information concerning the disposition of the report. The Division shall make information on the general disposition of the report available through the Division report line to any person required to report under this section.

Section 4. Amend § 904, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 904. Nature and content of report; to whom made.

(a) Any report of child abuse or neglect required to be made under this chapter shall~~must~~ be made by contacting the Child Abuse and Neglect Report Line for the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families. An immediate oral report shall~~must~~ be made by telephone or otherwise. Reports and the contents thereof including a written report, if requested, shall~~must~~ be made in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Division, or in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted by the Division. No~~An~~ individual with knowledge of child abuse or neglect or knowledge that leads to a good faith suspicion of child abuse or neglect shall~~may not~~ rely on another individual who has less direct knowledge to call the aforementioned report line.

(b) When a written report is made by a person required to report under § 903 of this title, the Division shall contact the person who made such report within 48 hours of the receipt of the report in order to ensure that full information has been received and to obtain any additional information, including medical records, which may be relevant to the contents of the report.

(c) When two or more persons who are required to report under § 903 of this title have joint knowledge of a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect, the telephone report may be made by one person with joint knowledge who was selected by mutual agreement of those persons involved. The report must include all persons with joint knowledge of the known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect at the time the report is made. Any person who has knowledge that the individual who was originally designated to report has failed to do so shall immediately make the report required under § 903 of this title.

Section 5. Amend § 905, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 905. Telephone reports, Child Protection Registry and information.

(a) The Division shall establish and maintain a 24-hour statewide toll-free telephone report line operating at all times and capable of receiving all reports of alleged abuse and neglect~~as defined in § 901 of Title 10.~~

(b) The Division shall maintain a Child Protection Registry and an internal information system ~~as defined by § 902 of this title. Reports unsubstantiated shall be kept~~ The Division shall keep unsubstantiated reports in the internal information system ~~by the Division.~~

(c) Every report of child abuse or neglect made to the Division shall be entered in the Division's internal information system ~~and each such report involving the death of, serious physical injury to, or allegations of sexual abuse of a child shall also be entered in the Department's multi-disciplinary tracking system.~~

(d) Upon receipt of a report on any multidisciplinary case, the Division shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency and shall provide a detailed description of the report received. Notwithstanding any provision of the Delaware Code to the contrary, to the extent the law enforcement agency with primary jurisdiction over the case is unable to assist, the primary law enforcement agency may request another law enforcement agency with jurisdiction to exercise such jurisdiction. Upon request, the other law enforcement agency may exercise such jurisdiction.

~~(d)~~(e) Although reports may be made anonymously, the Division shall in all cases, after obtaining relevant information regarding alleged abuse or neglect, request the name and address of any person making a report.

~~(e)~~(f) Upon receipt of a report, the Division shall immediately communicate such report to its appropriate Division staff, after a check has been made with the internal information system to determine whether previous reports have been made regarding actual or suspected abuse or neglect of the subject child, or any reports regarding any siblings, family ~~members~~ members, or the alleged perpetrator, and such information as may be contained from such previous reports. Such relevant information as may be contained in the internal information system ~~shall~~ must also be forwarded to the appropriate Division staff.

~~(f)~~(g) Upon receipt of a report of ~~child abuse or neglect~~ death, serious physical injury or sexual abuse, or any other report requested by the Investigation Coordinator, the Division shall ~~immediately~~ notify the Investigation Coordinator of the report, in sufficient detail to permit the Investigation Coordinator to undertake the Investigation Coordinator's duties, as specified in § 906 of this title.

Section 6. Amend § 906, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 906. State response to reports of abuse or neglect.

(a) The State's child protection system shall seek to promote the safety of children and the integrity and preservation of their families by conducting investigations ~~and/or~~ family assessments in response to reports of child abuse or neglect. The system shall endeavor to coordinate community resources and provide assistance or services to children and families identified to be at risk, and to prevent and remedy child abuse and neglect.

(b) It is the policy of this State that the investigation and disposition of cases involving child abuse or neglect shall be conducted in a comprehensive, integrated, ~~multi-disciplinary~~multidisciplinary manner that does all of the following:

(1) Provides civil and criminal protections to the child and the ~~community~~community.

(2) Encourages the use of collaborative decision-making and case management to reduce the number of times a child is interviewed and examined to minimize further trauma to the ~~child; and~~child.

(3) Provides safety and treatment for a child and his or her family by coordinating a therapeutic services system.

(4) Requires a multidisciplinary team response for all multidisciplinary cases. The State, with assistance from the Child Protection Accountability Commission, shall implement a Memorandum of Understanding among agencies and entities to ensure implementation of the multidisciplinary response to such cases.

(c)(1) In implementing the Investigation Coordinator's role in the child protection system, the Investigation Coordinator, or the Investigation Coordinator's staff, shall do all of the following:

a. Have electronic access and the authority to track within the Department's internal information system each reported case of alleged child abuse or ~~neglect~~neglect.

b. Monitor each case involving the death of, serious physical injury to, or allegations of sexual abuse of a child from inception to final criminal and civil disposition, and provide information as requested on the status of each case to the Division, the Department, the Delaware Department of Justice, ~~the Children's Advocacy Center~~children's advocacy center, and the Office of Child ~~Advocate~~Advocate.

c. Within 5 business days of the receipt of a report concerning allegations of child abuse or neglect by a person known to be licensed or certified by a Delaware agency or professional regulatory organization, forward a report of such allegations to the appropriate Delaware agency or professional regulatory ~~organization~~organization.

d. Report every case involving the death or near death of a child due to abuse or neglect to the Department of Justice and the Child Protection Accountability Commission under § 932(a) of this title and every case involving the death of a child to the Child Death Review Commission; andCommission.

e. Provide information to the Child Protection Accountability Commission ("CPAC"), as requested by CPAC, regarding the status, trends, and outcomes of any case or cases of child abuse or neglect that are reported to the Division. Reports to CPAC ~~shall~~may not disclose the identities of the child, alleged perpetrators, or others involved in the case or cases.

f. Participate as a member of the multidisciplinary team for cases outlined in paragraph(c)(1)b. of this section, and keep the team regularly apprised of the status and findings of the Investigation Coordinator.

(2) All information and records received, prepared, or maintained by the Investigation Coordinator, or the Investigation Coordinator's staff, are confidential and ~~shall be exempt~~ from the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, Chapter 100 of Title 29. However, the disclosure of case specific data and information to the multidisciplinary team is authorized to ensure a comprehensive, integrated, multidisciplinary response to child abuse cases.

(3) The Investigation Coordinator, and the Investigation Coordinator's staff, as state employees, are entitled to immunity in accordance with § 4001 of Title 10.

(d) In implementing law enforcement's role in the child protection system, the law-enforcement agency investigating a report of child abuse or neglect shall do all of the following:

(1) Report every case of child abuse or neglect to the Division as required by § 903 of this ~~title;~~ and title.

(2) Provide information as necessary to the Investigation Coordinator to permit case tracking, ~~monitoring~~ and monitoring, and reporting by the Investigation Coordinator.

(3) Notify the Department of Justice upon receipt of a report of death or serious physical injury of a child.

(4) Notify the multidisciplinary team as to whether it will be exercising jurisdiction in the case, or will be requesting another law enforcement agency with jurisdiction to exercise such jurisdiction. Upon request, the other law enforcement agency may exercise such jurisdiction.

(5) Promptly conduct a criminal investigation for any multidisciplinary case.

(6) Coordinate with the multidisciplinary team to secure forensic interviews and medical examinations, where applicable, and to conduct interviews while considering the criminal investigation together with the Division's statutory duties to promptly assess child safety. Absent good cause, children ages 3 through 12, and all suspected child victims of human trafficking, must be interviewed in a children's advocacy center.

(7) Participate as a member of the multidisciplinary team, and keep the team regularly apprised of the status and findings of its investigation.

(8) Comply with the reporting requirements to the Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline under § 1731(b)(2) and § 1731A of Title 24, and to further report to the Board within 30 days of the closure of a criminal investigation or the arrest of a person who is licensed to practice medicine under Chapter 17, Title 24.

(e) In implementing the Division's role in the child protection system, the Division shall do all of the following:

(1) Receive and maintain reports pursuant to the provisions of §§ 903 and 905 of this ~~title;~~ title.

(2) Forward reports to the appropriate Division staff, who shall determine, through the use of protocols developed by the Division, whether an investigation or the family assessment and services approach should be used to

respond to the allegation. The protocols for making this determination shall be developed by the Division and shall give priority to ensuring the well-being and safety of the ~~child~~child.

(3) Conduct an investigation on a multidisciplinary case that involves intrafamilial or institutional child abuse or neglect, human trafficking of a child, or death of a child 3 years of age or less that appears to be sudden, unexpected, and unexplained. The Division may investigate any ~~report, other report, but shall conduct an investigation involving all reports, which if true, would constitute violations against a child by a person responsible for the care, custody and control of the child of any of the following provisions of § 603, § 604, § 611, § 612, § 613, § 621, § 625, § 626, § 631, § 632, § 633, § 634, § 635, § 636, § 645, § 763, § 765, § 766, § 767, § 768, § 769, § 770, § 771, § 772, § 773, § 774, § 775, § 776, § 777, § 780, § 782, § 783, § 783A, § 791, § 1100A, § 1101, § 1102, § 1107, § 1108, § 1109, § 1110, § 1111, or § 1259 of Title 11, or an attempt to commit any such crimes. The Division staff shall also contact the Delaware Department of Justice and the appropriate law enforcement agency upon receipt of any report under this section and shall provide such agency with a detailed description of the report received. The appropriate law enforcement agency shall assist the Division in the investigation or provide the Division, within a reasonable time, an explanation detailing the reasons why it is unable to assist. Notwithstanding any provision of the Delaware Code to the contrary, to the extent the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the case is unable to assist, the Division may request that the Delaware State Police exercise jurisdiction over the case and upon such request the Delaware State police may exercise such jurisdiction;~~

(4) ~~The assisting law enforcement agency shall promptly conduct its own criminal investigation, and keep the Division regularly apprised of the status and findings of its investigation. Law enforcement agencies and the Division shall develop protocols to ensure compliance with this subsection; [Repealed.]~~

(5) Ensure that every case involving the death or near death of a child due to abuse or neglect is reported to the Child Protection Accountability Commission ~~under § 932(a) of this title and every case involving the death of a child to the Child Death Review Commission;~~Commission.

(6) Ensure that all cases involving allegations of child abuse or neglect by a person known to be licensed or certified by a Delaware agency or professional regulatory organization, have been reported to the appropriate Delaware agency or professional regulatory organization and the Investigation Coordinator in accordance with the provisions of ~~this section;~~section.

(7) ~~The Division shall have~~Have authority to secure a medical examination of a child, and any siblings or other children in the child's household without the consent of those responsible for the care, ~~eustody~~custody, and control of the child, if the child has been reported to be a victim of abuse or neglect; provided, that such case is

classified as an investigation pursuant to paragraph (e)(3) of this section and the Director or the Director's designee gives prior authorization for such examination upon finding that such examination is necessary to protect the health and safety of the ~~child;~~child. If such a medical examination is authorized under this section, the Division is authorized to transport the child to the medical examination. Medical examinations under this paragraph are covered under § 3557 of Title 18.

(8) ~~The investigation shall include, but need not be limited to,~~At a minimum, investigate the nature, ~~extent~~ extent, and cause of the abuse or ~~neglect, collection of evidence, the identity of the alleged perpetrator, neglect, collect~~ evidence; identify the alleged perpetrator; determine the names and condition of other children and adults in the ~~home,home;~~ home; ~~assess~~ assess the home environment, the relationship of the subject child to the parents or other persons responsible for the child's care, and any indication of incidents of physical violence against any other household or family ~~member,member;~~ perform background checks on all adults in the ~~home, and the gathering of~~home; and gather other pertinent ~~information;~~information.

(9) In the family assessment and services approach, assess service needs of the family from information gathered from the family and other sources. The Division shall identify and provide for services for families where it is determined that the child is at risk of abuse or neglect. The Division shall document its attempt to provide voluntary services and the reasons these services are important to reduce the risk of future abuse or neglect. If the family refuses to accept or avoids the proffered services, the Division may refer the case for investigation or terminate ~~services;~~services.

(10) Commence an immediate investigation if at any time during the family assessment and services approach the Division determines that an investigation as delineated in paragraph (e)(3) of this section is required or is otherwise appropriate. The Division staff who have conducted the assessment may remain involved in the provision of services to the child and ~~family;~~family.

(11) Conduct a family assessment and services approach on reports initially referred for an investigation, if it is determined that a complete investigation is not required. The reason for the termination of the investigative process ~~shall must be documented;~~documented.

(12) Assist the child and family in obtaining services, if at any time during the investigation it is determined that the child or any member of the family needs ~~services;~~services.

(13) Identify local services and ongoing medical needs, and assist with access to those services for children and families where there is risk of abuse or ~~neglect;~~neglect.

(14) Update the internal information system at regular intervals during the course of the investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation ~~or family assessment~~, the internal information system ~~shall~~ must be updated to include a case finding;

~~(15) When a written report is made by a person required to report under § 903 of this title, the Division shall contact the person who made such report within 48 hours of the receipt of the report in order to ensure that full information has been received and to obtain any additional information or medical records, or both, which may be pertinent; [Repealed.]~~

(16) Upon completion of an investigation or family assessment and services approach, if the Division suspects that the report was made maliciously or for the purpose of harassment, the Division shall refer the report and any evidence of malice or harassment to the appropriate law enforcement ~~agency~~ agency.

~~(17) Multidisciplinary services shall be used whenever possible in conducting the investigation or family assessment and services approach, including the services of law enforcement agencies, the medical community, and other agencies, both public and private; [Repealed.]~~

~~(18) A person required to report under § 903 of this title to the Division shall be informed by the Division of the person's right to obtain information concerning the disposition of the report. Such person shall receive, from the local office, if requested, information on the general disposition of the report at the conclusion of the investigation; [Repealed].~~

(19) In any judicial proceeding involving the custody of child, the fact that a report has been made pursuant to § 903 or § 905 of this title shall not be admissible unless offered by the Division as a party or as a friend of the Court or if the Division is a party. However, nothing herein shall prohibit the introduction of evidence from independent sources to support the allegations that may have caused a report to have been made; ~~[Repealed].~~

~~(20) To protect the privacy of the family and the child named in a report, the Division shall establish guidelines concerning the disclosure of information concerning the abuse and neglect involving a child. The Division may require persons to make written requests for access to records maintained by the Division. The Division shall only release information to persons who have a legitimate public safety need for such information or a need based on the health and safety of a child subject to abuse, neglect or the risk of maltreatment, and such information shall be used only for the purpose for which the information is released; and [Repealed.]~~

(21) Upon the receipt of a report concerning allegations of abuse or neglect against a person known by the Division to be licensed by ~~4~~ any of the boards listed in § 8735 of Title 29, forward reports to the Division of Professional Regulation. For any entity the Division is notified of that is not included in § 8735 of Title 29, the

Division shall forward a report of such allegations to the appropriate Delaware agency or professional regulatory organization.

(22) Coordinate with the multidisciplinary team to secure forensic interviews and medical examinations, where applicable, and to conduct interviews while considering the criminal investigation together with the Division's statutory duties to promptly assess child safety. Absent good cause, children ages 3 through 12, and all suspected child victims of human trafficking, shall be interviewed in a children's advocacy center.

(23) Participate as a member of the multidisciplinary team, and keep the team regularly apprised of the status and findings of its investigation.

(f) In implementing the Delaware Department of Justice's role in the child protection system, it shall do all of the following:

(1) Report every case of child abuse or neglect to the Division pursuant to § 903 of this title; title.

(2) Ensure that every case involving the death or near death of a child due to abuse or neglect is reported to the Child Protection Accountability Commission under 932(a) of this title and every case involving the death of a child to the Child Death Review Commission; Commission.

(3) Provide information as necessary to the Investigation Coordinator to permit case tracking, monitoring and reporting by the Investigation Coordinator; and Coordinator.

(4) Ensure that all cases involving allegations of child abuse or neglect by a person known to be licensed or certified by a Delaware agency or professional regulatory organization, have been reported to the appropriate Delaware agency or professional regulatory organization and the Investigation Coordinator in accordance with provisions of this section.

(5) Participate as a member of the multidisciplinary team, and keep the team regularly apprised of the status and findings of its prosecution.

(g)(1) In the event that If a criminal prosecution for child sexual abuse or exploitation or human trafficking of a child is initiated by the Delaware Department of Justice against a person employed by or associated with a facility or organization required to be licensed or whose staff personnel are required to be licensed under Delaware law whose primary concern is that of child welfare and care, the Delaware Department of Justice shall notify such employer within 48 hours.

(2) Any violations of this subsection shall be dealt with administratively by the Attorney General and the penalty provisions of § 914 of this title shall not apply hereto.

(h) ~~In the event that~~ If a criminal prosecution for abuse or neglect is initiated by the ~~Delaware~~ Department of Justice pursuant to a report under this chapter and incarceration of the person who is the subject of the report is ordered by the court, the ~~Delaware~~ Department of Justice shall keep the Division informed of actions taken by the courts which result in the release of any such individual.

Section 7. Amend § 907, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 907. Temporary emergency protective custody.

(a) A police officer, nurse practitioner, or a physician who reasonably suspects that a child is in imminent danger of suffering serious physical harm or a threat to life as a result of abuse or neglect and who reasonably suspects the harm or threat to life may occur before the Family Court can issue a temporary protective custody order may take or retain temporary emergency protective custody of the child without the consent of the child's parents, ~~guardian-guardian~~, or others legally responsible for the child's care.

(b) Any person taking a child into temporary emergency protective custody under this section shall immediately notify the Division, in the county in which the child is located, of the person's actions and make a reasonable attempt to advise the parents, guardians, or others legally responsible for the child's care. ~~Such person shall also file, as soon as practicable but no later than 12 hours thereafter, a written statement with the Division which sets~~ In notifying the Division, such person shall set forth the identity of the child and the facts and circumstances which gave such person reasonable cause to believe that there was imminent danger of serious physical harm or threat to the life of the child. Upon notification that a child has been taken into temporary emergency protective custody, the Division shall immediately respond in accordance with § 906 of this title to secure the safety of the child which may include ex parte custody relief from the Family Court if appropriate.

(c) Temporary emergency protective custody for purposes of this section ~~shall~~ may not exceed 4 hours and ~~shall~~ must cease upon the Division's response pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

(d) For the purposes of this section, ~~temporary emergency protective custody shall mean~~ "temporary emergency protective custody" means temporary placement within a hospital, medical ~~facility-facility~~, or such other suitable placement; provided, however, that an abused or neglected child may not be detained in temporary custody in a secure detention facility.

(e) A Division investigator conducting an investigation pursuant to § 906 of this title ~~shall have~~ has the same authority as that granted to a police officer, nurse practitioner, or physician in ~~paragraph-subsection~~ (a) of this section, subject to all the same conditions as those listed in ~~paragraphs-subsections~~ (a) through (d) of this section, provided that the

child in question is located at a school, day care ~~facility~~ facility, or child care facility at the time that the authority is initially exercised. In no other case ~~shall~~ may an employee of the Division exercise custody under this section.

Section 8. Amend § 908, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 908. Immunity from liability, and special reimbursement to hospitals for expenses related to certain babies.

(a) ~~Anyone~~ Any person participating in good faith in the making of a report or notifying police officers pursuant to this ~~chapter~~ chapter; assisting in a multidisciplinary case as required by § 906(b)(4) of this title; performing a medical examination without the consent of those responsible for the care, ~~custody~~ custody, and control of a child pursuant to § 906(e)(7) of this ~~title~~ title; or exercising emergency protective custody in compliance with § 907 of this ~~title~~ title ~~shall~~ have has immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise exist, and such immunity ~~shall extend~~ extends to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from the above actions taken in good faith. This section ~~shall~~ does not limit the liability of any health care provider for personal injury claims due to medical negligence that occurs as a result of any examination performed pursuant to § ~~906(e)(3)~~ 906(e)(3) of this ~~title~~ this chapter.

(b) A hospital, hospital employee or hospital volunteer which accepts temporary emergency protective custody of a baby pursuant to § 907A of this title is absolutely immune from civil and administrative liability for any act of commission or omission in connection with the acceptance of that temporary emergency protective custody or the provision of care for the baby when left at the hospital while said baby is in the hospital's temporary emergency protective custody except for negligence or intentional acts. If a hospital accepts temporary emergency protective custody of a baby pursuant to § 907A of this title, the State shall reimburse the hospital for eligible, medically necessary costs under the Medicaid Fee for Service Program.

Section 9. Amend § 909, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strikethrough and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 909. Privileged communication not recognized; judicial proceedings; disclosure of information.

(a) No legally recognized privilege, except that between attorney and client and that between priest and penitent in a sacramental confession, ~~shall apply~~ applies to situations involving known or suspected child abuse, neglect, ~~exploitation~~ exploitation, or abandonment and ~~shall~~ does not constitute grounds for failure to report as required by § 903 of this title or to give or accept evidence in any judicial proceeding relating to child abuse or neglect.

(b) In any judicial proceeding involving the custody of a child, the fact that a report has been made pursuant to § 903 or § 905 of this title is not be admissible unless offered by the Division as a party or as a friend of the Court. However, this

subsection does not prohibit the introduction of evidence from independent sources to support the allegations that may have caused a report to have been made.

(c) To protect the privacy of the family and the child named in a report, the Division shall establish guidelines concerning the disclosure of information concerning the abuse and neglect involving a child. The Division may require persons to make written requests for access to records maintained by the Division. The Division may only release information to persons who have a legitimate public safety need for such information or a need based on the health and safety of a child subject to abuse, neglect or the risk of maltreatment, and such information may be used only for the purpose for which the information is released.

SYNOPSIS

This Act makes updates to how reports of child abuse and neglect are handled by the various members of the multidisciplinary team. The Act codifies the multidisciplinary team and case. The Act adds additional duties to the Investigation Coordinator, law enforcement, the Department of Justice and the Division of Family Services that are current best practices but not required by law. The Act reorganizes the section pertaining to the Division of Family Services to reflect current best practices. The Act allows nurse practitioners to take emergency protective custody.

This Act also makes technical corrections to conform existing law to standards of the Delaware Legislative Drafting Manual.