



Registration for the 2024 CORE National Conference is now available on the CORE website: <http://www.core-dc> . Choose “Learn More” under the conference link.

**IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, YOU WILL RECEIVE:**

- 1) A Request for Proposal Form for Presenters**
- 2) Nomination Forms for the Catherine Hershey Awards**

Unlike previous conferences, we are starting early this year with plans for the 2024 National CORE Conference. This year's conference is being hosted by Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu, HI.

This year's conference will be an ideal destination conference and early planning can enable more agencies to plan to be represented. The time shared in Chamberlain, SD last year at the 2023 conference included sightseeing opportunities prior to the

conference. That served not only to provide folks an opportunity to take advantage of the surroundings, but also to get to know one another better. We anticipate a similar experience with the 2024 National Conference.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



### **H.R. 3852 – Create Accountable Respectful Environments (CARE) for Children Act**

The Act was introduced by Rep. Neal Dunn [R-FL]. There are 16 cosponsors - 12 from Florida, 3 from Mississippi and 1 from Texas.

The Act is aimed at increasing capacity, keeping sibling groups together, and providing children a normalized home and community environment with opportunities for age-appropriate normalized extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities and the same freedoms afforded peers living with families.

The Act adds "cottage family homes" to the continuum of care for which Title IV-E funding can be used. The term "cottage family home" means a family-like home operated by a public or private child-care agency licensed or approved by the state where it is located.

Cottage family homes offer a family-like living environment in a single-family style residence with no more than two children per bedroom unless it is in the best interest of children; and one in which children are under the care of live-in home parents that implement the reasonable and prudent parent standard and provide 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or caretakers.

The cottage family home model:

- Equips children with full time cottage parents available to provide supervision and nurturing around the clock.
- Enables siblings to stay together.
- Provides a myriad of checks and balances to ensure the child's safety.
- Offers community and enrichment opportunities for children.
- Creates a layer of support for the parents of children in care. Instead of attempting to replace parents of children, agencies work with parents and their children to resolve difficulties with the goal of reunification.
- Guarantee that staff receive extensive training and use a systemic approach in providing trauma informed care

Because the health safety and well-being of children is so critically important, this Act offers the following stipulations:

- Requiring the implementation of a trauma informed approach to care.
- Prohibiting the use of seclusion, mechanical or chemical restraints.
- Allowing the use of short-term physical restraint if approved in the agency's policies to prevent injury to self or others and the prohibiting the use of prone physical restraint.
- Requiring providers to have a system in place for children to alert a staff person(s) if they have concerns or feel they have unfairly been denied their rights or are subject to the threat of mistreatment.
- Requiring a continuous quality improvement methodology that regularly solicits information from children concerning their perceptions of the quality of care and identification of strengths and weakness of the program.

The Act is intended to address or assist in resolving the shortage of appropriate foster homes for children. It provides a system of check and balances to ensure a child's ongoing safety and well-being in a cottage family home and makes the child's placement eligible for foster care maintenance payments.

### **H.R. 2955 – Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act**

The Act was introduced by Rep. Ro Khanna [D-CA] on 4/27/23. There are 74 cosponsors. Eleven were added in November 2023, seven in December 2023, nine in January 2024 and one in February 2024.

#### **S.1351 – Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act**

The Act was introduced by Sen. Jeff Merkley [D-OR] on 4/27/23. There are 22 cosponsors.

### **H.R. 755 – Protecting Sibling Relationships in Foster Care Act**

The Act was introduced by Rep. Don Bacon on 2/02/23. There are 7 cosponsors.

### **H.R. 756 –Foster Care Stabilization Act**

The Act was introduced by Rep. Bacon on 2/02/23. There are 6 cosponsors.

#### **S.102 – Foster Care Stabilization Act**

The Act was introduced by Sen. Deb Fisher on January 26, 2023. There is one Cosponsor.



- Nationally during FFY 2022, 3,096,101 children received either an investigation response or alternative response at a rate of 42.4 children per 1,000 in the population.
- For FFY 2022, 52 states reported 558,899 victims of child abuse and neglect. This is a national rate of 7.7 victims per 1,000 children in the population.
- FFY 2022 data show 74.3 percent of victims experience neglect, 17.0 percent are physically abused, 10.6 percent are sexually abused, and 6.8 percent are psychologically maltreated.
- A nationally estimated 1,990 children died from abuse and

neglect at a rate of 2.73 per 100,000 children in the population.<sup>1</sup>

The 2022 Child Maltreatment report can be found: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>.

## Methodist Home Boys Ranch

Report Provided by Traci Wagner, MA, LCCA, LCPAA



You have walked with us as we developed then implemented the plan to transition the Boys Ranch basic residential program to the MCH campus in Waco in order to serve a different population at the Boys Ranch. I thought it was time for an update!

Upgrades and renovations at the Boys Ranch are nearing completion including enhanced safety features throughout facilities, school with sensory room supports, medical clinic, gymnasium, and dining hall. We are on track to receive referrals very soon! We will open one home in early 2024 and we have broken ground on 2 new homes that will come online in 2025.

The required state contracts and permits are nearing completion for us to serve moderate+ levels of care. The final licensing walk through is scheduled for February 22.

We are actively hiring and training staff to work alongside Tony Stewart, Boys Ranch administrator, who comes to MCH with decades of group care experience and leadership and a heart for trauma informed care through our commitment to TBRI. Our medical, behavioral health, admissions and compliance teams are also providing support to the Boys Ranch operation, and we have strong partnerships with community medical and behavioral health providers. The University of Texas Charter School has been strong partners with MCH for decades and will provide educational components on site for students at the Boys Ranch.

Laura Bonner, Clinical and Compliance Administrator, will soon reach out to SSCs and other referral sources to take care of individual contract requirements as we are excited to partner to receive referrals for young men who might benefit from Boys Ranch care.

Please forward to anyone with an interest or who could benefit from any of the MCH programs and services across Texas and New Mexico, including the new moderate+ programming that will soon be offered at the Boys Ranch in McLennan County.

We appreciate the prayers, support, and guidance as we have walked this path to transition services at the Boys Ranch. If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Traci