



# 2018 Child Advocacy Day Hot Topics & Talking Points

## Extended Postpartum MO HealthNet Coverage for At-Risk Mothers (HB 2280)

- Medicaid offers many pregnant women access to physical and mental health services. However, many lose their coverage 60 days after giving birth, limiting access to treatment for ongoing health issues that surfaced or intensified during pregnancy.
- Pregnant women with Medicaid coverage have higher rates of smoking, physical abuse and postpartum depression symptoms compared to pregnant women not covered by Medicaid. Mothers with postpartum depression may self-medicate with controlled substances, which could result in hostile parenting or child abuse.
- HB 2280 extends Medicaid coverage for one year after giving birth for mothers that receive substance abuse treatment, helping to ensure healthy moms and babies.

## Comprehensive Criminal Background Checks for Child Care Providers (HB 2249 & SB 985, also this provision was added to HB 1350 & HB 2042)

- Many Missouri child care facilities currently conduct only limited background checks on providers.
- Parents want to know that their children are safe with child care providers. This means providers do not have violent offenses, have not abused or neglected children, have not committed sex offenses and have not engaged in any other questionable behavior.
- Comprehensive background checks help keep kids safe. They include a FBI criminal history check and searches of the national sex offender registry and the state's criminal, sex offender and child abuse and neglect registries.

## Raise the Age for Adult Prosecution from 17 to 18 (HB 1255 & SB 793)

- Missouri is one of only five states that prosecutes 17-year-olds as adults. Brain development occurs during teen years, and as a result, these youth are still developing impulse control, self-awareness and the ability to inhibit inappropriate and risky behavior.
- If prosecuted as an adult, youth are more likely to re-offend and return to prison. They will also have greater difficulty finding employment and earn lower lifetime wages.
- Raising the age for adult prosecution to 18 will allow 17-year-olds to access Missouri's nationally recognized juvenile justice program, enabling them to chart a better course for their lives.
- Missouri can maximize 17-year-olds' opportunity to become adults who can make positive contributions to society if it responds with alternatives to adult prison when they break the law.

## Child Abuse/Neglect and Foster Care Issues (HCB 11)

This is an omnibus bill containing several provisions related to Child Abuse, Neglect, and Foster Care and Adoption. It contains non-controversial but important changes, including:

- Waiving fees for older foster youth to obtain official copies of documents (e.g. birth certificates)
- Allowing older foster kids to open bank accounts
- Granting more time for certain kids to comply with state immunization requirements
- Requiring regular background checks for foster home members
- Improving the state's ability to investigate interstate child abuse and neglect cases
- Raising Missouri's standards for assessment and treatment of foster children up to those recommended by the American Academy of Pediatricians