

## Information about Child Abuse and Neglect

### Background

- Victims of abuse and neglect may come to the Clinical Center through a variety of channels.
- Hospitals are required to identify possible victims of abuse or neglect and report suspected abuse/neglect as required by law.

### Maryland Code: Child Abuse

- “**Physical injury**, not necessarily visible, or **mental injury** of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.”
- “**Mental injury** – the observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child’s mental or psychological ability to function.”

*(Maryland Code/Family Law/Title 5. Children Subtitle 7 Child Abuse and Neglect)*

### Maryland Code: Child Neglect

“**Leaving of a child unattended** or other **failure to give proper care and attention to a child** by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child, under circumstances that indicate:

- that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm; or
- mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury.”

#### **An “Unattended Child”**

- A child who has been abandoned.
- A child under 8 left alone or in the care of a person who is not reliable or under age 13.
- A child aged 8-12 left alone for longer than brief periods, without support systems (should include: phone numbers of parents, other family members or neighbors, information about personal safety, and what to do in an emergency). Children in this age group may not be left to care for children under 8.
- A child 12 or over who is left alone:
- For long hours or overnight, or with responsibilities beyond his/her capacities
- Or, where there is some special risk factor such as mental retardation or physical handicap that would indicate that the child may be in jeopardy
- A child of any age who is handicapped and left alone, if the handicapping condition constitutes a special risk factor which indicates that the child is in jeopardy.

*(Maryland Statewide Child Protective Screening Procedures SSA 95-13)*

### Maryland Code: Child Sexual Abuse

“Any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation, whether injuries are sustained or not, of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member.”

*(Maryland Code/Family Law/Title 5. Children Subtitle 7 Child Abuse and Neglect)*

**Note:** Clinical Center Policy dictates that “If a health practitioner has reason to suspect that **an adult patient was abused and/or neglected as a child** and has reasonable cause to suspect that

the alleged perpetrator is currently in a position to abuse or neglect a child, the health practitioner should” report the abuse.

**How to report child abuse or neglect:**

[Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect In The Clinical Center \(pdf\)](#)

**For more information:**

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**Clinical Center Policy:**

[M94-5: Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect In The Clinical Center \(pdf\)](#)