

By: Senator(s) Carlton

To: Judiciary

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2413

1 AN ACT TO ALLOW FORMATION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY REVIEW TEAMS
2 TO EVALUATE AND INVESTIGATE REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT; TO
3 SPECIFY THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TEAMS; TO REQUIRE AN ORDER OF THE
4 YOUTH COURT AS A CONDITION PRECEDENT TO THE FORMATION THEREOF; TO
5 SPECIFY THE TEAM PARTICIPATION OF A CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER; TO
6 PROHIBIT THE DISCLOSURE OF ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM A TASK
7 FORCE MEETING; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

9 **SECTION 1.** (1) The district attorneys or the Department of
10 Human Services may initiate formal cooperative agreements with the
11 appropriate agencies to create multidisciplinary child protection
12 teams in order to implement a coordinated multidisciplinary team
13 approach to intervention in reports involving alleged severe or
14 potential felony child physical or sexual abuse, exploitation, or
15 maltreatment. The multidisciplinary team also may be known as a
16 child abuse task force. The purpose of the team or task force
17 shall be to assist in the evaluation and investigation of reports
18 and to provide consultation and coordination for agencies involved
19 in child protection cases. The agencies to be included as members
20 of the multidisciplinary team are: the district attorney's
21 office, city and county law enforcement agencies, county
22 attorneys, youth court prosecutors, and other agencies as
23 appropriate.

24 (2) To implement the multidisciplinary child abuse team, the
25 team or task force must be authorized by court order from the
26 appropriate Youth Court. The court order will designate which
27 agencies will participate in the cooperative multidisciplinary
28 team.



29 (3) (a) Teams created under this section may invite other
30 persons to serve on the team who have knowledge of and experience
31 in child abuse and neglect matters. These persons may include
32 licensed mental and physical health practitioners and physicians,
33 dentists, representatives of the district attorney's office and
34 the Attorney General's office, experts in the assessment and
35 treatment of substance abuse or sexual abuse, the victim
36 assistance coordinator of the district attorney's office and staff
37 members of a child advocacy center.

38 (b) (i) A child advocacy center means an agency that
39 advocates on behalf of children alleged to have been abused and
40 assists in the coordination of the investigation of child abuse by
41 providing a location for forensic interviews and promoting the
42 coordination of services for children alleged to have been abused.
43 A child advocacy center provides services that include, but are
44 not limited to, forensic medical examinations, mental health and
45 related support services, court advocacy, consultation, training
46 for social workers, law enforcement training, and child abuse
47 multidisciplinary teams; and staffing of multidisciplinary teams.

48 (ii) Child advocacy centers may provide a
49 video-taped forensic interview of the child in a child friendly
50 environment or separate building. The purpose of the video-taped
51 forensic interview is to prevent further trauma to a child in the
52 investigation and prosecution of child physical and sexual abuse
53 cases. Child advocacy centers can also assist child victims by
54 providing therapeutic counseling subsequent to the interview by a
55 qualified therapist. Child advocacy centers can also assist law
56 enforcement and prosecutors by acquainting child victim witnesses
57 and their parents or guardians to the courtroom through child
58 court school programs.

59 (4) A team or task force created under this section shall
60 review records on cases referred to the team by the Department of



61 Human Services or law enforcement or the district attorney's
62 office. The team shall meet at least monthly.

63 (5) No person shall disclose information obtained from a
64 meeting of the multidisciplinary team unless necessary to comply
65 with Department of Human Services' regulations or conduct and
66 proceeding in Youth Court or criminal court proceedings or as
67 authorized by a court of competent jurisdiction.

68 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
69 and after July 1, 2002.

