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Task Force Recommends State's First Veterans Court

Prince George's County is Home to the Largest Veteran Population in the State

By BRANDON GOLDNER
Capital News Service

BOWIE - After tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, Nicholas Stefanovic left the Marine Corps in 2006, but like many of his brothers, he immediately began to experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

So he found what he thought was a solution: prescription painkillers.

"Drugs are a very effective cure for mental health disorders," Stefanovic, 31, said. "They eventually become the main problem."

For three years, Stefanovic's drug addiction was his main problem, which led to other issues.

"It took everything from me," Stefanovic said. "It left me broke, homeless so in order to get money, I was cashing checks that weren't mine."

In April 2009, the New York man was arrested for illegally cashing checks. But instead of having a court date in a regular criminal court, he was placed in a veterans court in Rochester, N.Y.

Veterans courts are similar to drug courts, and have gained popularity. Soon, they may begin operating in Maryland.

There are at least 130 veterans courts established in 35

states. Another 100 courts are in the planning stages.

A Maryland state task force has recommended that a veterans court be established at the circuit court level in Prince George's County. The county is home to the largest veteran population in the state.

Sen. Douglas J.J. Peters, D-Prince George's, is a Desert Storm veteran who chaired the task force. He said a veterans court would allow fellow soldiers to interact and heal each other.

"Soldiers respond to soldiers," Peters said. "If I'm sitting across the table from you, and I can say, 'Look, I was in combat. I went through that. You can make it. You can do it.'"

Peters said the Maryland veterans court proposal is in the planning stages, and if approved by the Maryland Court of Appeals, could open by the end of the year.

Many experts said veterans courts save money; something Maryland could use as the state's top budget analyst is projecting a \$500 million budget deficit.

Matthew Stiner, a veteran who established a veterans court in Tulsa, Okla., said veterans courts save money because it

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Maryland Has One of the Highest Rates of Marijuana Possession Arrests

By CHRISTOPHER NEELY
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON - Maryland is a state with a serious marijuana arrest problem, according to the FBI's 2011 annual Uniform Crime Report.

With 22,043 arrests for marijuana possession producing an arrest rate of 378 people per

100,000, Maryland ranked among the top five in marijuana possession arrests according to the most recent data available. This is not new for the Free State.

Since 2007, Maryland has been in the top five states in marijuana possession arrest rate.

"I have no idea why these numbers are so high," said state Sen. Bobby Zirkin, D-Baltimore County, who is an advocate for

marijuana decriminalization in Maryland. "The numbers are shocking and staggering."

Experts say the numbers are in part the result of the war on drugs being focused on petty marijuana possession arrests starting in the 1990s. Some also attribute much of the increase to then-Baltimore Mayor and now Gov. Martin O'Malley, who helped introduce both sta-

tistics driven policing and zero tolerance policies to the state.

Because of issues with reporting statistics to the FBI, it cannot be said for sure where in the top five Maryland ranks. While most states and cities participate, reporting crime statistics is voluntary, and some

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Anti-Fracking Protesters Await General Assembly



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY PATRICK FARRELL.

During a protest outside the Maryland State House, Gina Angiola, a retired physician from Olney, voices her concerns regarding fracking in Montgomery County. Residents from each of the five fracking zones took turns explaining their concerns for the bill.

By LYLE KENDRICK
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS - A coalition of protesters stuffed papers into passing legislators' hands calling for an extension of a statewide fracking moratorium as the General Assembly began its opening day Wednesday.

More than 75 protesters and members of environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club and the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, met in front of the State House for the rally.

The coalition of protesters called for a bill that would mandate an 18-month review period before the General As-

sembly could allow any drilling permits, after a pending study concludes.

During 2011, Gov. Martin O'Malley issued an executive order preventing the Maryland Department of the Environment from approving drilling permits until the end of a scientific study looking at frack-

ing. The study is planned to be finalized later this year.

"Whatever the answers are, we need the science to dictate this," said Delegate Heather Mizeur, D-Takoma Park, who spoke at the rally.

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Congressman Andy Harris Opposes Unemployment Benefits Extension

By MARY FADDOUL
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON - Maryland's lone Republican in Congress opposes an extension of emergency unemployment insurance unless the plan includes job creation, such as expanded natural gas and oil exploration.

"If we're going to extend the unemployment benefits we should find a way to pay for it and pay for it now," said Rep. Andy Harris, R-Cockeysville. He suggested reducing future unemployment by creating jobs through the Keystone pipeline, which would transport crude oil from Canada and the northern U.S. to Texas.

The \$6.5 billion projected cost of extending unemployment benefits has Harris on the opposite side of the issue from several members of Maryland's congressional delegation.

When unemployment insurance neared its Dec. 28 expiration, affecting about 23,000 Marylanders, the Senate and House of Representatives failed to pass an extension. This week,

the Senate moved closer to a 3-month extension with a 60-37 procedural vote.

It's not clear if the House will follow suit.

"We want to be compassionate, we want to make certain that people who can't find employment in an economy that can't produce jobs have coverage," Harris said. "But the fact of the matter is that our economy could produce jobs, but we have to do some common sense things like expand the natural gas and oil exploration boom that is in the U.S."

Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Kensington, has been pushing for an extension and has proposed an offset for the cost, which was insisted on by House Speaker John Boehner. The offset, he explained, would call for cuts in agriculture subsidies.

Emergency unemployment insurance, passed at the peak of the recession in 2008 and extended a number of times since, provides Marylanders with about \$300 a week.

See HARRIS Page A3

Maryland Plans to Reform Health Care Spending

By PATRICK FARRELL
Capital News Service

BALTIMORE - State and federal officials announced Friday the approval of a Medicare waiver in Maryland that could put the state at the forefront of progressive health care.

The plan marks the first step in the state's plan to move away from fee-for-service financing in hospitals in an attempt to establish a system of preventative, better

quality care.

"The new waiver will allow us to improve the wellbeing of whole populations that are served by hospitals, while at the same time giving our hospitals the [financial] predictions they need over time to be able to be sustainable - to keep their doors open," Gov. Martin O'Malley said at a press conference at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore.

In the past, a link between reimbursement and admissions led hospitals to admit as many

patients, for as much treatment as possible, in order to receive the most financial support - a system O'Malley called "treating hospitals like hotels."

Under the new system, hospitals will be allotted a set number of funds to utilize in a global budget - which will be limited to a 3.58 percent increase during each of the first five years. It is designed to encourage systems of preventative care that will reduce the burden placed

on emergency rooms and hospital readmissions.

Speaking on the rollout of these preventative care measures, Vincent DeMarco, president of the Maryland Health Care for All Coalition, said, "the methods have been there, but no one had any incentive for using them."

U.S. Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., Sen. Ben Cardin, D-

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INSIDE

Raising the Minimum Wage

Officials announce a new system of health care delivery that could serve as a nationwide model. The initiative to modernize Maryland's unique all-payer rate-setting system for hospital services will improve patient health and reduce health care costs. The agreement will allow the state to adopt new policies.

Community, Page A3

Disciplinary Policies

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Education Secretary, Arne Duncan announced a set of guidelines to tackle the problem of "zero tolerance" disciplinary policies in schools. The National Urban League has been pointing out that students of color and students with disabilities receive harsher punishments.

Commentary, Page A4

Health Care Coverage

Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown announced that an estimated several thousand Marylanders who experienced technical challenges on the health reform website will be able to enroll in the private plan of their choice with coverage retroactive. Officials have been working to get Marylanders enrolled

Business, Page A5

Movie Review: "American Hustle"

There is indeed something uniquely American about American Hustle, a loosely fact-based comic drama about chicanery, ambition, corruption, government bureaucracy, and good old-fashioned greed. Nearly everyone from the self-admitted con men to the upright FBI agents, is conning someone else.

Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear Earth Talk
What is the Obama administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative and what does it hope to accomplish?

— Doug St. James, New York, NY

Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

A final goodbye to Morningside and Skyline people who died last year

I'd like to pay one last tribute to those I've written about during the past year, those who ever lived or ever worked in Skyline or Morningside, and who died in 2013. I know I've missed some. Call and let me know; it's never too late.

In chronological order, the following had 2013 obituaries in my column: Michael Foster, New Year's Eve; Walter Parson, Jan. 2; Jean Davis, Jan. 13; Marion Asare, Jan. 17; Kathleen Walthall, Jan. 31; Grace Carruth, Feb. 17; Jim Cray, March 28; Adrienne Gooding, April 5; Kenny Carnes, April 14; Carl Burger, May 4; Harry Guy, May 9; Jane Cowan, May 31; Deacon Ernest Pruitt, Aug. 15; August Steinhilber, Aug. 20; Dorothy Carroll, Aug. 22; Leo Handley, Aug. 28; Wilfredo Feliciano, Aug. 31; Lillian Holmes, Sept. 3; A.C. (Ann Carol) Crispin, Sept. 6; Randy Himes, Oct. 6; Jacqueline Parson, Oct. 12; Jacqueline Ware McClain, Oct. 15; Carol Roy Bowen, Oct. 18; Victoria Thieberger, Nov. 5; Everett Lamont Tucker, Nov. 5; Matthew Aiken, Nov. 8; Carroll Hawkins, Nov. 16; Kenneth "Doc" Goodale, Nov. 24; Chester Lanehart, Nov. 29. We miss you!

Neighbors

Lorraine Wright, of Camp Springs, has received the 2014 Manifesting the Kingdom Award from the Archdiocese of Washington for her service to St. Philip the Apostle Parish. She currently heads the ushers, has been prefect of the Sodality, and helps the parish in other multiple ways.

In last weeks' column I wrote the sad story of Laura Townsend, the 71-year-old

woman killed as she crossed Suitland Parkway at Forestville Road early the morning of Dec. 27. A Washington Post obit reveals she is survived by five children, three grandchildren and a sister. Her memorial service was at New Image Community Baptist Church, in SE Washington. She had been reported missing from her home on Alabama Avenue on Oct. 26.

Changing landscape

County Executive Baker provided remarks at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the New Dimensions Healthcare System Family Health and Wellness Center, 5001 Silver Hill Road in Suitland, on June 16.

Family Nights at the K of C

The Knights of Columbus in Forestville is hosting Family Night the third Thursday of every month, from 5 to 9 p.m. They offer a steak or salmon dinner and, if you wish, provide the grill for you to grill your own. Admission is \$10.

They will be adding Philippine cuisine to the menu, including lumpia, chicken adobo and pancit. Their very own Philippine cuisine specialist, Encar Hutchins, will be there to introduce these dishes. In fact, you can call Encar at 240-561-0134 for more information.

Where's the log cabin?

John Kelly's Washington column in the Washington Post, of Jan. 5, recounts the history of Trinity Episcopal Church, which stood, looking magnificent, for 85 years at the corner of Third and C streets NW. It was the work of the famous architect James Renwick, best known for designing the Smithsonian Castle.

The church fell on bad times and was demolished in 1936.

Parts of it were given to local churches, but the Gothic foundation and piers—including the original cornerstone—were sold to a Camp Springs family for use in building a log cabin. Can anyone tell me where that log cabin is?

May they rest in peace

Next week I'll have obituaries of two old friends, June Hall and Jane Wright, both of whom died this month.

James William "Billy" Sheriff Jr., 60, of La Plata, 1971 graduate of Crossland, died Jan. 1. He was the son of James and Betty Lou Sheriff. He was a licensed Ham Radio operator and worked in the communications/electronics field, retiring in 2012 after 42 years with Teltronic, Inc. Survivors include his wife of 26 years, Susan Ann (Lockwood) Sheriff and brother Raymond. Burial was at Cedar Hill.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Claire Kennedy, Jan. 24; Kenneth Brown and Michelle Willis, Jan. 25; my great-grandson Jason Shearer, Jan. 22; Father Thomas LaHood and Yvonne Garvin, Jan. 27; Sister Zion and Lisa Call, Jan. 29; David Call, Martha Kline and Joanne (Clark) Bunch, Jan. 30. And Jason Tomlinson reminded me that I didn't wish him a happy 31st birthday on Christmas Day. Sorry, Jason!

January 28 marks the 28th anniversary of Space Shuttle Challenger's explosion 73 seconds after lift-off. Seven astronauts died in this first fatal U.S. in-flight accident, including Christa McAuliffe, a teacher whose first teaching job was at Benjamin D. Foulis Junior High in Morningside.

Neighborhood Events

Metro Has Updated its Major Track Work Calendar Detailing Major Weekend Rebuilding and Construction Projects Through the End of June 2014.

The calendar—available at wmata.com/trackwork—shows the date, locations where buses will replace trains, closed stations and a description of the work to be performed for the next several weeks.

Metro is about halfway through a six-year \$5 billion capital improvement program to improve the safety and reliability of the system. The investment to install new rail, ties, platforms, escalators, signals, lighting, communication systems, and more represents the largest capital investment—and work effort—since the system's original construction in the early 1970s.

We encourage you and your organization to use this calendar as an event and travel planning tool as you plan your 2014 calendar. For detailed information about weekend work, we encourage you to sign up for MetroAlerts email and text messages at wmata.com/metroalerts.

Edwards Denounces Latest Republican Attempt to Scare Americans from Signing up for Health Care

Washington, DC — Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (MD-04) released the following statement today after House Republicans passed HR 3811, the "Exchange Security and Transparency Act." The legislation places unique security requirements to the Affordable Care Act's website that would not apply to any other federal or private website. The bill passed the House, and marks the 47th time that House Republicans have voted to repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act.

"House Republicans have failed at every turn to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and are now determined to scare Americans from signing up on healthcare.gov with bogus privacy and security claims," said Congresswoman Edwards. "Thankfully, Americans are far too smart to be duped by this latest attack. Millions are signing up across the country. They're discovering that women are not being charged higher prices, no one is being denied coverage based on a pre-existing condition, and health care costs are growing at their lowest rates in 50 years. These are the facts of the Affordable Care Act, despite how many votes Republicans hold to the contrary."

Mikulski Malls on Senate to Pass Unemployment Insurance Fix Providing Critical Safety Net for Marylanders Who Need it Most

Senator cosponsored legislation to extend UI for 23,000 Marylanders whose benefits expired January 1

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) today spoke on the Senate floor in support of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act, bipartisan legislation that would provide a critical safety net of Unemployment Insurance (UI) for 23,000 Marylanders whose benefits expired on January 1.

"I come here today with a great sense of urgency and

passion over the fact that we need to extend these unemployment insurance that expired January 1st. This is one of the coldest spells that we've had in decades in the Northeast-Midwest area. And I find it unfathomable when it is so cold, that the big chill in Washington is that we're not going to extend unemployment benefits," Senator Mikulski said. "In my own home state of Maryland right this very minute 23,000 people are affected. That's 23,000 families that have now lost a modest benefit which averages out to about \$313 per week that enables people, while they're looking for work, to be able to pay for their housing, pay for their food and pay for their heat."

Last month, Senator Mikulski cosponsored the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act, which was introduced by Senators Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and Dean Heller (R-Nev.). The legislation would provide a three month extension through April 1, 2014 of federal UI for more than 1.3 million Americans.

The UI system is a partnership between the federal government and state governments that provides a temporary weekly benefit to qualified workers who lose their job and are seeking work. Employers pay into unemployment insurance through federal and state taxes affecting the total compensation for employees. In Maryland, UI has been a critical lifeline for 188,000 Marylanders over the past six years, providing families who need it most with an average of \$300 each week, covering approximately 43 percent of household costs. Unemployed Marylanders currently get 63 total weeks of benefits, including 26 from the state and 37 from the federal government.

Van Hollen Applauds Treasury Announcement on Treatment of Volunteer Emergency Responders Under Health Reform Law

Washington, DC — Today Maryland Congressman Chris Van Hollen applauded the Treasury Department's announcement that it would issue regulations shortly to ensure that, under the Affordable Care Act, volunteer hours of volunteer emergency responders at government or tax-exempt organizations would not be counted when determining full-time employees. Congressman Van Hollen wrote to the IRS this week urging it to issue this clarification.

"I'm pleased that Treasury will make this common-sense clarification under the Affordable Care Act," said Congressman Van Hollen. "It is part of our continuing effort to ensure that this health reform law, which has already provided health insurance coverage to millions of Americans, is implemented in a way that makes sense for families and communities."

Mikulski Statement on Filing of Emergency Unemployment Insurance Fix

Senator cosponsored legislation to extend UI for 1.3 mil-



Mikulski Speaks on Filing of Emergency Unemployment Insurance Fix

lion Americans including 23,000 Marylanders whose benefits expired January 1

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) issued the following statement after the filing of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act, bipartisan legislation that would provide a critical safety net of Unemployment Insurance (UI) for 1.3 million Americans, including 23,000 Marylanders whose benefits expired on January 1.

"I am deeply disappointed at the continued obstruction that has left more than a million Americans who've lost their job out in the cold. Unemployment insurance is a social compact that American workers pay into so that it is there when they need it," Senator Mikulski said. "In my own home state of Maryland right this very minute 23,000 people are affected. That's 23,000 families that have now lost a modest benefit which averages out to about \$313 per week that enables people, while they're looking for work, to be able to pay for their housing, pay for their food and pay for their heat. During this time of when we look at how to create jobs, we must make building a bridge to get a job a national priority."

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Brandywine-Aquasco

by Ruth Turner 301 888 2153

SUPER BOWL SPAGHETTI DINNER

The St. Philip's Church, Baden Parish will be hosting a 'Super Bowl Spaghetti Dinner' on Sunday, February 2, 2014, following worship service. Dinner cost will be \$5.00 for adults and \$2.50 for children (12 years and under). Dinners will include spaghetti, salad, French bread and cake. Pre-orders and payments appreciated. POC's regarding this matter are Shirley Ann Cleaves and Doretha Ann Savoy. Benefit St. Philip's Church located at 13801 Baden Westwood Road Brandywine, Maryland. Telephone number is 301-579-9002.

CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Body Recall is scheduled to resume on Monday, January 27, 9:00 AM. We will meet every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, unless the Church Office is closed or school is on a delayed opening schedule. We are located at 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland 20735. Church Office number is 301-868-1281. E-mail: cumcmd@verizon.net.

AQUASCO FARM

Aquasco Farm is located in rural Prince George's County. The address is 16665 Aquasco Farm Road Aquasco, Maryland 20608. The property is managed for bow hunting in conjunction with land owned by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Special areas are set aside for beagle training. The contact telephone number is 301-62-6074; TTY 301-669-2544. Hours of operation are sunrise to sunset daily.

JOHN ISABELLE ACRES FARM, INC

John Isabelle Acres Farm, Inc. in Brandywine, Maryland has hay for sale. Contact Frank Deville, Manager for reasonably priced quality hay for horses, cows and goats at 301-466-8360.

BADEN COMMUNITY CENTER

A Charmed Fashion Show will be on January 25, 2014 from 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM. The Fashion Show will give benefits such as poise, self-esteem, etiquette and manners. Cost is free (ages 4-14). The Center is located at

13601 Baden-Westwood Road Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Contact number is 301-888-1500; TTY 301-203-6030.

CAA WOMAN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2014

Join us Thursday March 13, 2014 and Sunday March 16, 2014 for the woman's Basketball Championship 2014 at 2:00 PM. The venue is Show Place Arena located at 14900 Pennsylvania upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772. You can purchase your tickets on line at Ticketmaster.

CAMP SPRINGS SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER

This Senior Activity Center offers different activities Mondays-Fridays from 9:00 AM-4:30PM. The Center is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. For additional information call 301-449-0490; TTY 301-446-3402. The Food and Friendship Program offers a nutritionally balanced lunch daily at this center. To make your reservations, please call the Area Agency on Aging Office at 301-265-8450.

The Prince George's Post

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Subscription price is \$15 a year.

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

A Guide to Managing Someone Else's Finances

Anyone who's ever been asked to step in and manage their parents' or someone else's personal finances can tell you that it's an awesome responsibility — and by "awesome," I don't mean "totally cool." It's more like "inspiring an overwhelming feeling of fear." (Thank you, Dictionary.com.)



In recognition that millions of Americans act as fiduciaries (i.e., manage money or property) for loved ones, often with no formal training or expertise, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has created four, easy-to-understand caregiver guides called "Managing Someone Else's Money" (at www.consumerfinance.gov).

CFPB Director Richard Cordray notes that there are 50 million older Americans — and millions of aging baby boomers are rapidly approaching retirement. Some 22 million people over 60 have already given someone power of attorney to make their financial decisions, and millions of others — including younger disabled adults — have court-appointed guardians or other fiduciaries. "In order to protect our seniors, we must educate the caregiver generation," he explains.

Sometimes that means learning more about the financial products and services available to seniors to help them make informed choices. But often, it's the caregivers themselves who must make critical decisions — whether they've got power of attorney for a parent with Alzheimer's or have been tapped to manage Social Security benefits for a disabled friend.

The CFPB guides are geared toward people in four different fiduciary capacities:

Someone has granted you "power of attorney" to make money and property decisions on his or her behalf.

"Court-appointed guardian," where a court appoints you guardian over a person's money and property when they can't manage it themselves.

You're named as "trustee" under someone's revocable living trust and have decision-making powers over the trust's assets.

"Government fiduciary," where you've been appointed by the government to manage someone's Social Security or Veterans Administration income benefits.

The CFPB cites four main responsibilities for fiduciaries: Act in the person's best interest. For example, a fiduciary shouldn't loan or give the person's money to themselves or others and should avoid other conflicts of interest. The guides provide examples of actions that may pose conflicts.

Manage money and property carefully. This includes paying bills on time, protecting unspent funds, investing carefully, and maintaining a list of all monies, properties and debts.

Keep your money and property separate. This means paying the person's expenses from his or her own funds, and avoiding joint accounts.

Maintain good records: Keep detailed lists of money received or spent on the person's behalf, avoid paying in cash in order to have a record of purchases, and keep all receipts.

The guides walk caregivers through their fiduciary responsibilities and provide practical money-management ideas, such as what sorts of records you should keep, how to interact with banks and other professionals on their behalf, and suggestions for avoiding conflicts with family members and friends who disagree with your actions.

They also provide tips for spotting financial exploitation and avoiding scams. As Cordray notes, seniors "make attractive targets because they often have tangible household wealth — whether it is in retirement savings or home equity — but they may be isolated or lonely or otherwise susceptible to being influenced by a predator in disguise."

Bottom line: Fiduciaries must be trustworthy, honest and act in good faith. If you don't meet these standards you could be removed from the position, sued, forced to repay ill-spent money or possibly even jailed. That's why it's important to make sure you're qualified before accepting the responsibility of watching over someone's finances.

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To Follow Jason Alderman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney

O'Malley Administration Announce Health Care Reform Initiative that will Improve Health and Reduce Costs

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

BALTIMORE (January, 2014) -- Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown joined Sen. Barbara Mikulski, Sen. Ben Cardin and senior officials from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to announce a groundbreaking new system of health care delivery that could serve as a nationwide model. The initiative to modernize Maryland's unique all-payer rate-setting system for hospital services will improve patient health and reduce health care costs. The agreement will allow the state to adopt new policies that reduce per capita hospital expenditures and improve health outcomes as encouraged by the Affordable Care Act.

"We need to shift away from our near exclusive focus on treating illness, and move to a balanced approach that encourages prevention and wellness," Gov. O'Malley said. "Such a shift will reduce costs for families and small businesses and will simultaneously keep many Americans from dying of preventable causes."

"By incentivizing hospitals to improve services and reduce the costs of providing care, we're making Maryland a better, healthier place for all of our families," said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown. "By modernizing the nation's first all-payer hospital system, we're continuing our commitment to develop new and innovative solutions to our persistent health challenges."

Under Maryland's current Medicare waiver, Maryland has set its own rates for hospital services for 36 years. Maryland is the only state in the nation to operate an all-payer hospital rate setting system, under which all patients pay the same rate for services at the state's hospitals. The new model will allow Maryland to set global budgets and other alternative approaches to payment that reward systems of care that provide improved outcomes at lower cost. Support for this new model has come from a coalition of the hospitals, the insurance companies, the state and CMS all working together with a common vision.

"Today is a great day for Maryland patients, hospitals, insurers, and tax-payers," Senator Mikulski said. "This new initiative — developed by the state and approved by the federal government — will modernize Maryland's unique 'all-payer system,'

allowing our state to continue pioneering work to reduce health costs, improve quality of care, ensure access to care for all in need, and serve as a model for the nation. As someone who is so proud to have worked on developing the original waiver, today is an exciting day."

"For nearly four decades, Maryland's unique system has been a model for patient access, cost containment, and financial stability, providing more equitable payment levels among payers than anywhere else in the nation," said Senator Cardin. "The revised Medicare waiver will allow us to continue our state's commitment to increasing quality and reducing health care costs, while giving the federal government the opportunity to evaluate innovative approaches to reform."

"Maryland's unique approach to health care delivery has always emphasized increasing quality and reducing health care costs," said Congressman Steny Hoyer. "The modernization of our waiver builds on that commitment, and allows Maryland to continue focusing on developing new, innovative approaches to improving patient outcomes, containing costs, and increasing both the efficiency and quality of our health care delivery system."

Under the new model, Maryland's hospitals have committed to achieving significant quality improvements, including reductions in hospital readmission rates and hospital acquired conditions rates. The model will limit the growth in hospital spending per capita, including inpatient and outpatient care, to growth in the state's economy. It will also limit annual Medicare per capita hospital cost growth to a rate lower than the national annual per capita growth rate. The model is expected to save the federal government at least \$330 million in Medicare spending over the next five years.

"By shifting away from traditional fee-for-service payment, Maryland's new model encourages collaboration between hospitals and physicians to improve patient care, promotes innovative approaches to prevention, and accelerates efforts to avoid unnecessary admissions and readmissions," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. "We appreciate the support of CMS for creative approaches to addressing the challenges of the health care system."



PHOTO BY OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Governor Martin O'Malley announce a groundbreaking new system of health care delivery that could serve as a nationwide model.

"Today's announcement is an encouraging step to ensure that Maryland's unique health care delivery system can also be aligned with the goals of lowering cost and improving health outcomes for our citizens," said CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner. "We hope that this can serve as an example for other states that they can work with us to achieve the shared goals of creating a more efficient health system that also delivers improved care for the American people."

"For four decades, Maryland's unique system of paying for hospital care, and hospitals' partnership with state officials, the state rate setting commission, insurers, and others, has put Maryland at the forefront of innovation and equity," said Maryland Hospital Association President & CEO Carmela Coyle. "We appreciate the Administration's leadership in pre-

serving this unique system for the future, and we look forward to an even closer collaboration with the state and our patients and communities as we embark upon a path that promises lower costs, higher quality, and a healthier Maryland."

The new model will complement a number of steps Maryland has taken in recent years to improve our health care system. The State has built an electronic platform for medical records, which now connects hospitals across our state with critical patient data. In addition, the State is developing an innovative approach that links community health outreach and planning to primary care. Maryland has also created Health Enterprise Zones to address persistent health disparities in five targeted areas across the state.

For further information, visit: <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/SitePages/Medicare%20Waiver%20Modernization.aspx>.

Harris from A1

According to a press release from Rep. John Delaney's office, 28,500 Marylanders will lose their benefits in the first six months of the year.

In a letter to Boehner in mid-December, he suggested a one-year extension.

"Now is certainly not the time," Delaney, D-Potomac, wrote, "to further decimate vital federal assistance to workers who have lost their job through no fault of their own and who must actively seek work in order to be eligible for unemployment benefits."

In a statement from her press office, Rep. Donna Edwards, D-Fort Washington, expressed support for the extension.

"It's time for House Republicans to stop playing political games and join Democrats in extending unemployment insurance for 1.3 million Americans,

including 22,900 Marylanders," she said.

An extension is moving through the Senate with bipartisan support, but consideration in the House is at Boehner's discretion, according to Delaney's office.

Veterans A1

emphasizes rehabilitation instead of jail time.

"Instead of spending money on incarceration, which costs about \$32,000 a year [for one veteran], it costs maybe \$5,000 ... to run one of these programs for someone to go through," Stiner said.

The effort to spread veterans courts to more jurisdictions now includes the help of a famous actress.

Melissa Fitzgerald, known for playing "Carol Fitzpatrick" on

"The West Wing" was just recently named senior director of Justice for Vets, an organization that advocates for veterans courts.

"This is such a pivotal moment in our nation's history," Fitzgerald said on why she joined the cause. "We get to decide how we get to treat our veterans."

She said veterans courts support our ideals as Americans.

"We are supporting our troops," Fitzgerald said. "We are honoring their service, and we are showing our gratitude as a grateful nation by offering them

a road back home."

But Larry Burch, a Navy veteran and attorney who represents many fellow veterans in criminal cases in Maryland and Washington, D.C., said court systems like Maryland's take the wrong approach when it comes to veterans.

"They've still not treated the underlying illness which isn't drug abuse, it's the psychological injury," Burch said recently, standing outside the Prince George's County Courthouse in Bowie. "The courts here, they don't have time to delve into that."

In communities with veterans courts, the payoff is sometimes clearly evident.

Veterans court activists say the majority of individuals who go through the program do not return to the criminal system, but instead become model citizens like Stefanovic.

He's now working in the very same court he graduated from.

"It was what saved me," Stefanovic said. "It gave me purpose in the end to try to get that opportunity to as many veterans as I could."

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COMMENTARY

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S POST

A Community Newspaper for Prince George's County

Barbara A. Mikulski United States Senator for Maryland



Chairwoman Mikulski Statement on the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, released the following statement on the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014:

"The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 is the product of bipartisan, bicameral compromise.

Chairman Rogers and I forged this agreement, along with our Ranking Members, Senator Shelby and Congresswoman Lowey, because we are determined to fulfill Congress' most basic Constitutional responsibility: funding the operations of the federal government.

But we didn't do it alone. The agreement includes the work of all of our Subcommittee Chairs and Ranking Members — in total, nearly 50 Members of the House and Senate, an equal number of Democrats and Republicans. It is truly a bipartisan agreement that a significant number of Members worked day and night over the holidays, and I thank them all for their dedication.

I'm especially pleased that we were able to right a wrong in this bill and keep faith with our veterans. We do that by repealing the recently enacted cut to COLA's for disabled military retirees and survivors. This is the right thing to do and I am proud that we were able to include it in this larger funding plan.

This agreement shows the American people that we can compromise, and that we can gov-

ern. It puts an end to shutdown, slowdown, slamdown politics.

I'm pleased that this agreement includes all 12 appropriations bills. For the first time since 2011, no mission of our government will be left behind on autopilot.

We also keep faith with hard working federal employees in this bill by funding their first COLA increase in four years and ending the uncertainties of shutdowns and furloughs. That's the right thing to do.

This agreement will not be viewed as perfect by everyone. It required difficult choices, and nobody got everything they wanted. But this agreement is what we need now to move the country forward by funding the critical missions of our government and investing in America's greatest assets -- our people, our infrastructure, and the research and discoveries that will create jobs today and in the future. And at the same time, the agreement ensures the American people get value for their taxpayer dollars by ending dated, duplicative, and dysfunctional programs.

This agreement would not have been possible without the hard work of Budget Committee Chairmen Murray and Ryan, and I thank them for their efforts to provide this path.

The House and Senate will consider the agreement this week, and I look forward to its passage and enactment."

Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



Holder and Duncan Reform Outdated School Discipline Policies

"A routine school disciplinary infraction should land a student in the principal's office, not in a police precinct."

Eric Holder, United States Attorney General

On January 8, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Education Secretary, Arne Duncan came to Baltimore's historic Frederick Douglass High School to announce a comprehensive set of guidelines to tackle the problem of "zero tolerance" disciplinary policies in our schools. As the National Urban League and others have been pointing out for years, students of color and students with disabilities receive disproportionately more and markedly harsher punishments for the same misbehaviors as other students. This obviously discriminatory treatment is not only denying an education to thousands of minority students, it is funnelling too many of them into the criminal justice system and feeding the school-to-prison pipeline.

According to data collected by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, African American students without disabilities are more than three times as likely as their white peers without disabilities to be expelled or suspended. The New York Times, in its Sunday editorial called the treatment of disabled students "a national disgrace." The Times cites a finding by the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the University of California that "in ten states, including California, Connecticut, Delaware and Illinois, more than a quarter of black students with disabilities were suspended in the 2009-10 school year."

The National Urban League has long stood with parents and others who have challenged so-called "zero-tolerance" policies that have unfairly targeted students of color and done more harm than good in many public schools. In fact, in a 2007 essay in the National Urban League's State of Black America, Children's Defense

Fund President Marian Wright Edelman wrote, "The growth in school expulsions and suspensions contributes to increasing numbers of children and teens entering the prison pipeline. Discouraged teens who are suspended or expelled are more likely than their peers to drop out of school altogether."

To respond to this challenge, the Obama Administration guidelines direct educators to take three deliberate actions. First, do more to create the positive school climates that can help prevent and change inappropriate behaviors. Second, ensure that clear, concise and consistent expectations are in place to prevent and address misbehavior. And third, schools must understand their civil rights obligations and strive to ensure fairness and equity for all students. The administration is distributing a resource package to schools and targeting grant money to train teachers and staff in ways to improve student behavior and school climate.

We applaud this action and believe the elimination of racially skewed zero tolerance policies must be an indispensable part of any future discussion of education reform. A growing number of school districts and schools, including Baltimore's Frederick Douglass High, have already begun to reform their approach to discipline and are seeing positive results. Suspensions have dropped 46 percent at Frederick Douglass since 2007. More schools should follow their lead. As Attorney General Holder said, "Too often, so-called zero-tolerance policies — however well-intentioned...disrupt the learning process and can have significant and lasting negative effects on the long-term well-being of our young people — increasing their likelihood of future contact with juvenile and criminal justice systems." We cannot afford to keep putting our kids at risk or wasting their potential and jeopardizing the future of our nation with this misguided policy.

Open to the Public



Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center is a vibrant community of artists, students and audiences, where great work happens both on- and offstage. We present approximately 1,000 events each year spanning all performing arts disciplines. Transformative performances, workshops, lectures, dialogues and other events featuring visiting artists from around the world, as well as students and faculty from the university's academic departments of music, dance and theatre, allow for unparalleled engagement.

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



Treat Children as Children

"Most parents have long understood that kids don't have the judgment, the maturity, the impulse control and insight necessary to make complicated lifelong decisions." — Bryan Stevenson, Equal Justice Initiative

"Don't lose hope. Understand? With hope you can always go on." — Pope Francis after washing young inmates' feet at the juvenile detention center where he chose to break tradition and celebrate Holy Thursday Mass in one of his first official acts as Pope. The prison's chaplain, Father Gaetano Greco, said the visit would "make them see that their lives are not bound by a mistake, that forgiveness exists, and that they can begin to build their lives again." Children are not little adults. Adolescents are not the same as adults. We've known this for years. The research showing that their brains are still developing is clear. Although young people act on impulse, they have the ability to positively change and have a productive future.

That's why it's outrageous that in the 21st century we still ignore the consequences of automatically funneling children into the adult criminal justice system against so much research on youth development and juvenile justice best practices. It's bad for public safety and it's bad for the youths and their families.

One of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF)'s earliest research projects was its 1976 report Children in Adult Jails, documenting the inhumane, ineffective practice of treating children like adult criminals and housing them side by side in the same prisons. Some states had already begun abolishing this harmful practice decades earlier but others were resisting change or dragging their feet. Judge Justice Wise Polier, who was New York State's first woman judge and presided on New York City's Family Court for 38 years, was then the director of CDF's Juvenile Justice Division housed at the Field Foundation. In the foreword to the 1976 report she chided the states that continued to prosecute children in the adult criminal justice system saying, "[i]t has been over three-quarters of a century since states began to legislate that children should be treated as children."

Nearly forty years later the good news is that there are only two states left that automatically treat all 16- and 17-year-olds like adult criminals. The bad news is that Judge Polier's home state, New York, is one of them. North Carolina is the other. It's time for change.

Our society takes adolescent brain development into account

in many ways and takes steps to protect children and youths. We don't allow youths to do certain things because we say they are not mature enough to fully appreciate the consequences of their actions. Young people can't see certain movies without an adult until their 17th birthdays and can't see others at all until they turn 18. They can't buy alcohol until their 21st birthdays. In New York young people can't get a tattoo under age 18. The New York City Council recently voted to raise the legal age of buying tobacco products and electronic cigarettes from 18 to 21.

Yet (there is a double standard) the day a young person turns 16 in New York they are automatically treated as adults in the criminal justice system when charged with a crime. This means a 16-year-old can be arrested and spend a night or more in jail locked up with older adults without his or her parent or guardian ever knowing. A young person can spend five long years incarcerated alongside adults before they are old enough to buy a beer. And even younger children—some as young as 13 years old—can be treated as adults in New York State's criminal justice system when charged with murder or other serious or violent offenses and assumed to be criminally responsible, and automatically prosecuted as an adult before they've entered high school, although they are not detained in adult facilities until 16 or in some cases 21.

Charging children and youths as adults and incarcerating them with adults is the opposite of an effective intervention that helps young people turn their lives around and decreases crime. It makes

our communities less safe.

Youths processed in adult criminal justice systems are re-arrested and re-incarcerated at higher rates than youths processed in the juvenile justice system. Eighty percent of youths released from adult prison reoffend for more serious crimes. Incarcerating youths in adult jails puts them directly in harm's way. They suffer increased rates of physical and sexual abuse and high rates of suicide. Youths in adult facilities are 36 times more likely to commit suicide while incarcerated than those in juvenile facilities. They also are often subject to solitary confinement like adults—16- and 17-year-olds sitting in isolation twenty-three hours a day, for days, weeks, and months at a time. This is cruel and unusual punishment.

Like so many policies in our nation's criminal justice system, youths of color are disproportionately affected and treated as adults. A Black boy born in 2001 has a one in three chance of going to prison in his lifetime and a Latino boy a one in six chance of the same fate. The repercussions of treating youths as adults in the criminal justice system affect communities when young people returning home are denied jobs, educational opportunities, and housing as a result of having a criminal record. Families are torn apart by the immigration consequences of criminal records including deportation. The legacy of an adult criminal record on a child, his or her family, and his or her community is long lasting.

See WATCH, Page A5

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BUSINESS

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Improving Your Chances In Today's Job Market

While the nation's economy is improving in many areas, the employment market still presents numerous challenges. If you are currently job hunting, now is a good time to examine how you're presenting yourself and to see if there are ways to improve your marketability.

The following suggestions can help you better focus your job search, especially if you are in the midst of looking for a new career path:

1. Explore your desires. Take time to evaluate where you are in life and where you'd like to be. What career options would excite you, make you happy? Give yourself permission to dream.
2. Inventory yourself. What are your best work skills? How good are they? Are there things you need to improve? What do you, or would you, enjoy most in your daily work?
3. Update your resume. Update it regularly. Check out a local career center, or a current resume writing book, to be sure yours is looking polished and presenting the best picture of you. Consider doing multiple resumes, each highlighting a specific skill or interest area.
4. Attend workshops. Look for opportunities to strengthen or broaden your skills. Consider taking a local community college course to add new skills.
5. Network. Networking is the primary way people get interviews. Make contacts a key strategy in your job search. Check out your local career center, volunteer for committees at your place of worship or a local charity, call old work colleagues and friends. "Who you know" really does matter. The more people you meet, the more likely you are to hear about a job opening in an area that interests you, and the more likely you are to meet someone who can recommend you. Asking for "informational interviews" with those in a company or a field that interests you is another way to make contacts.
6. Make yourself marketable. Take a hard, honest look at yourself. If you were an employer, would you hire you? What can you do to improve your marketability? Write out a plan with a timeline over the next month or so, then take the steps to make changes.

Finding a job or changing to a new career can not only bring financial rewards, but can result in your being happier and more fulfilled in your work. If you need help, consider talking to a professional counselor who specializes in career counseling.

Counseling Corner is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACA-corner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org

Business Spotlight

Prince George's County Implements New Temporary County-based Certification for Local Businesses

LARGO, MD — The Prince George's County Supplier Development & Diversity Division announces that a new resolution to the Jobs First Act is in effect that allows the County to issue temporary County-based certifications to businesses whose principle place of operation is located in Prince George's County. The purpose of the temporary certification is to consider local businesses with certain existing business certifications to be certified County-based businesses for a period of one year, while undergoing the normal County-based business certification process.

"The County recognizes that the introduction of new business certification processes can be confusing and often requires a significant period of transition," said Sharon Moore Jackson, acting executive director, Prince George's County Supplier Development & Diversity Division. "We want local businesses to have every opportunity possible to take advantage of the benefits of the County-based certification."

Once issued, the temporary certification will be in place for a period of one year, giving sufficient time to complete the standard County-based certification process. Companies interested in temporary County-based certifications must be headquartered in Prince George's County and must have an existing Minority Business Enterprise/Disadvantage Business Enterprise (MBE/DBE) certification with at least one of the following organizations:

- Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
- Maryland-District of Columbia Minority Supplier Development Council (MD-DC/MSDC)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Women Presidents' Education Organization (WPEO)
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA); and/or certified with the U.S. Small Business Administration as a social or economically disadvantaged business or as a HUBZone small business.

The resolution to the Jobs First Act regarding temporary certifications will expire July 1, 2015. After this date, temporary certifications will no longer be issued.

The Supplier Development & Diversity Division will begin hosting FREE monthly trainings on the County-based certification process. For more information regarding this resolution or the Jobs First Act, please contact SDDD at 301-883-6480 or visit www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sddd.

O'Malley, Brown Announce New Efforts to Assist Marylanders Who Had trouble Enrolling Through Website

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

The Administration also announces decision to stay the course with Maryland Health Connection site

ANNAPOLIS, MD (January, 2014) — Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown today announced that an estimated several thousand Marylanders who experienced technical challenges on the health reform website will be able to enroll in the private plan of their choice with coverage retroactive to January 1.

Maryland officials have been doing everything they can to (a) get as many Marylanders as possible enrolled in health coverage, and (b) help Marylanders adversely affected by the technological problems the Maryland Health Connection web site has experienced. State officials have been working closely with the private insurance carriers in Maryland, and urging them to offer retroactive coverage back to January 1 for individuals who had difficulties signing up through the website late last year. On Monday, all four insurance carriers participating in the state-based exchange — CareFirst, Evergreen Co-op, Kaiser Permanente, and United — agreed to make retroactive coverage available.

"We encouraged the carriers to make this program available because we want as many Marylanders as possible to enroll in health coverage, and because we want to provide whatever assistance we can to individuals and families

who had difficulty using the web site," Gov. O'Malley said.

"We are 100% focused on making health care available to more Marylanders," said Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown. "By working with the carriers to establish retroactive coverage and passing MHIP legislation to provide a bridge for those who need care the most, we're making a positive difference in the lives of Marylanders across our State."

Starting today, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange will reach out to consumers with known issues in their applications prior to January 1, and offer them an opportunity to register with the program. Other Marylanders who experienced significant website problems that prevented enrollment and are interested in coverage back to January 1, should call the Consumer Support Center to be considered for the program.

The carriers set a deadline of 5 pm on January 21, 2014 to enroll in the program. Therefore, anyone wishing to enroll in the program must do so before that deadline. Anyone with questions about enrolling, or who wishes to enroll, should call the Consumer Support Center at 1-855-642-8572. Staff from the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange will reach out to program participants to confirm eligibility and record plan selection. Coverage will be effective once consumers pay their January and February premiums — the deadline for paying is February 15, 2014. Consumers will then be able to submit bills for medical services received back to January 1 for reimbursement



PHOTO BY OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown announced that an estimated several thousand Marylanders who experienced technical challenges on the health reform website will be able to enroll in the private plan of their choice with coverage retroactive to January 1.

under the terms of their policy.

"We share the State's interest in getting as many Marylanders as possible enrolled in health coverage for 2014," said CareFirst Blue-Cross BlueShield President and CEO Chet Burrell. "It's part of our mission to support programs that increase access to health care and this step certainly does just that."

The new option is expected to significantly reduce the number of Maryland residents who might need to take advantage of the proposed option of joining the Maryland Health Insurance Program. Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown remain committed to their legislative proposal, so that MHIP can continue to serve as a safety net of last resort.

Summary:
Deadline to REGISTER for the program: January 21

Deadline to PAY January and February premiums: February 15

To ask questions or to enroll: Call the Consumer Support Center at 1-855-642-8572

In addition, after evaluating the feasibility of using certain back-end functions of the federal marketplace, the Governor and Lt. Governor have decided that during the remaining months of open enrollment, the risks associated with a transition to the federal site would outweigh the benefits. The IT team and the vendors working on the project will continue the ongoing efforts to fix the remaining technical issues so that more Marylanders can enroll in coverage during the open enrollment period that ends March 31, 2014.

Watch from A4

We know how to be smart on crime and provide children and youths age appropriate interventions. Some other states are doing this well. New York has also made important advances for children not yet in the adult system. Governor Andrew Cuomo championed juvenile justice reforms with the Close to Home Initiative which acknowledges that youths are best served in their communi-

ties where they can earn education credits and stay connected to their families instead of being isolated in facilities many hours away. In other states, advocates for youths in the system have helped reduce the number of children in adult jails and prisons 54 percent since 2000 and 22 percent since 2010 with commitment, hard work, and persistence. But an estimated 250,000 youths are still tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults each year.

In his State of the State address on January 8, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a Commission that will help devise a plan to raise the age in New York. The State Legislature should join him in implementing this sensible policy. It's past time to raise the age and for New York and North Carolina to take the next step to treat children and youths as children and youths and protect them from adult criminals. We must never give up on

any child until we have tried every means to put them on the path to successful adulthood.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org.

HEALTH from A1

Md., and Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown, indicated Friday they believe the waiver approval will be a key component in the effort to provide those incentives.

Joshua Sharfstein, secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, noted that there are 10 rural hospitals - including Western Maryland Medical Center - that are currently paid

on a global budget instead of fee-for-service. Sharfstein noted that when he has visited these hospitals, they have a "different feel" that highlights the new plan's effort to reinforce quality over quantity.

"The hospitals are quieter ... and emergency departments have a special team that meets with each patient," Sharfstein said.

Maryland will remain the only state with a waiver from the federal Medicare rates. Under

the waiver, rates for medical services are set by the state Health Services Cost Review Commission. Advocates believe this will allow Maryland to show lower Medicare costs, compared to the rest of the nation, and could become a model for other states to follow.

Additionally, Maryland is currently the only state to utilize an all-payer system of health care, under which hospital pay-

ments are identical for all payers.

The success of the waiver and preventative-care reform will play a key part in health care reform on a national scale, as other states look to the successes and difficulties of the program's rollout as a benchmark for progressive health care strategies.

"We in Maryland will set the example for what other states can do, and we'll do it by modernizing," Brown said.

Fracking from A1

Many of the protestors and rally speakers voiced concerns with potential gas extraction in the Western Maryland portion of the Marcellus Shale basin and the part of the Taylorville basin that extends under part of Southern Maryland, including Prince George's County.

Joelle Biele, a writer from Ellicott City, said she attended the rally because she wants the legislature to understand the impact of fracking on drinking water.

According to a Duke University study, homes around fracking wells in Pennsylvania and New York had high methane concentrations.

Gina Angiola, a retired physician from Olney who spoke at the event, said leakages are inevitable and the public does not even know what chemicals are being used for gas extraction.

"We really have a massive health experiment going on," she said.

But some in the natural gas industry said gas extracted from shale is a cleaner option than coal and would be a major job provider for the state.

Natural gas creates half the carbon output as coal, said Jim Norvelle, the director of communications at Dominion Energy, a unit of Dominion Resources, a Virginia-based power company.

Dominion's planned Cove Point facility in Lusby would export gas from the Marcellus Shale basin, particularly from Pennsylvania and Ohio, to Asian countries like Japan and India.

"This is a game-changing environment and the abundant supply of natural gas is bringing manufacturing back to our country," Norvelle said. "It's bring jobs back to our country."

While protestors handed out pamphlets outside the State House against fracking, there were stacks of papers outside the chamber rooms



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY PATRICK FARRELL.

Fracking Protest

supporting exporting natural gas. The pamphlets included the names of some members of the North Americas Building Trades Unions.

Some protestors at the rally said they do not want the export facility.

Paul Christensen, an electrical engineer from Tracy's Landing, said he thinks the facility would bring more traffic and pollutants to the Chesapeake Bay.

Mizeur said she hopes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commis-

sion will do an environmental impact study on the development and the Public Service Commission asks the appropriate questions as they go through the permit process.

Many protestors said they want Marylanders to consider the long-term implications of projects like Cove Point.

"We have to make a transition to a clean energy future," said Pat Delaquil, an energy systems analyst from Annapolis.

OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

“American Hustle”

“American Hustle”
Grade: B

Rated R, pervasive harsh
profanity, a little violence

2 hrs., 18 min

There is indeed something uniquely American about American Hustle, a loosely fact-based comic drama about chicanery, ambition, corruption, government bureaucracy, and good old-fashioned greed.

Nearly everyone in it, from the self-admitted con men to the supposedly upright FBI agents, is conning someone else. Sometimes it's for reasons that are arguably altruistic (like tricking a criminal into helping you catch bigger criminals), and sometimes it's for personal reasons like love and jealousy. Either way, if there's one thing we Americans are good at, it's talking people into things. Originally, Eric Warren Singer's screenplay was called "American Bull****," which is even more to the point.

The year is 1978. The hairstyles are big, the clothes are flamboyant. Irving Rosenfeld (Christian Bale), a portly, disheveled fast-talker and inveterate con artist since childhood, owns a few dry-cleaning stores but makes his real money through phony money-lending scams. In this latter enterprise he finds a new partner, Sydney Prosser (Amy Adams), who uses a fake British accent to lull potential marks into believing she and Irving are trustworthy. (This is surprisingly effective in real

life, too.) Irving has a needy, neurotic wife at home, Rosalyn (Jennifer Lawrence), but wants to escape from her, from New York, from everything.

When Irving and Sydney are caught in an FBI sting, the upward-striving agent in charge, Richie DiMaso (Bradley Cooper), makes them a deal: use their expertise to help him make four other as-yet-undetermined busts and they're off the hook. The familiar "crooks help cops catch other crooks" formula is entertaining as usual, with Sydney and Irving's dual narrations filling us in on the comically elaborate methods of baiting a trap and hooking a sucker. ("The more you say no, the more they want in on something," Irving says. "It's so stupid.") But it gets thorny when, in the process of busting small-time criminals like themselves, Irving and Sydney stumble upon opportunities to nab bigger fish -- like bribe-taking politicians and the Mafia. Richie DiMaso is as giddy as a kid on Christmas over the prospects, while his underworld pawns want nothing to do with something that dangerous.

Director David O. Russell (Three Kings, Silver Linings Playbook), more playful than ever, rewrote enough of the screenplay to get a shared credit, and allowed his cast -- many of whom had worked with him before -- to get into character and improvise. Accordingly, the film has a sort of disciplined looseness to it, tightly paced and shrewdly constructed but also ridiculously



A fictional film set in the alluring world of one of the most stunning scandals to rock our nation, American Hustle tells the story of brilliant con man Irving Rosenfeld (Christian Bale), who along with his equally cunning and seductive British partner Sydney Prosser (Amy Adams) is forced to work for a wild FBI agent Richie DiMaso (Bradley Cooper). DiMaso pushes them into a world of Jersey powerbrokers and mafia that's as dangerous as it is enchanting. Jeremy Renner is Carmine Polito, the passionate, volatile, New Jersey political operator caught between the con-artists and Feds. Irving's unpredictable wife Rosalyn (Jennifer Lawrence) could be the one to pull the thread that brings the entire world crashing down. Like David O. Russell's previous films, American Hustle defies genre, hinging on raw emotion, and life and death stakes. (c) Sony

entertaining. The hair and costumes are key, both in establishing the time period and in reminding us not to take it too seriously.

Bale is mesmerizing as Irving, totally immersed in the outlandish caricature of a man made mostly of pot belly and comb-over. Adams' cleavage is showcased nearly as much as her acting; Lawrence struggles a bit with the New York accent but brings emotion to her semi-tragic dimwit character; Cooper, his tightly permed hair

making him all the more punchable, plays the weaselly DiMaso to the hilt.

The expansive story hints at deeper themes -- how we all do things we don't like in order to survive, how the American dream lends itself so readily to exploitation by greedy hustlers -- but you don't get the impression Russell intended to deliver a thoughtful treatise or exposé. He's here for kicks and giggles, and the movie offers plenty.

The Edge of Sports

by DAVE ZIRIN

Jovan Belcher's Murder-Suicide: Did the Kansas City Chiefs Pull the Trigger?

"Sports, perhaps better than any endeavor except politics, has become adept at a type of cleansing more commonly associated with authoritarian governments. With surprising regularity and ease, once-popular figures who have run afoul of the rules or the law have been erased like disgraced leaders from an old Soviet photo album, whitewashed from history." — Richard Sandomir, The New York Times

On December 1, 2012, Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Jovan Belcher murdered his baby's mother, Kasandra Perkins. Then Belcher drove to the team's facility next to Arrowhead Stadium and took his own life in front of head coach Romeo Crennel and General Manager Scott Pioli. Before committing suicide, Belcher "thanked" Scott Pioli and asked him as well as team owner Clark Hunt to care for his infant daughter, Zoey.

It is still chilling to even write these words. This should have been a story for our times and a reference point from where we measure every overblown "scandal" in sports. Instead, with a chilling uniformity, the NFL moved on like it was just a commercial break in the action. Every network, with the exception of NBC, barely touched on the horror in their pre-game and half-time shows that weekend. The name Kasandra Perkins went unsaid. As for NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, he made the Super Bowl media rounds the following month and Jovan Belcher's name somehow didn't come up once.

This past weekend, Kansas City completed a remarkable turnaround from having the league's worst record and was back in the playoffs. Yet as much as pre-game shows love segments about teams "overcoming the odds", there was nothing about how new head coach Andy Reid was able to right the ship after such a tragedy. How did learning that their teammate was a killer who took his life in the franchise's parking lot affect this Kansas City team? You would never know. Belcher seemed destined to be thrown into the memory hole, erased from the sports world, no different and no more or less important than Reggie Bush's vacated 2005 Heisman Trophy. That is what made the news of a lawsuit levied against the Kansas City organization by Belcher's mother Cheryl Shepherd last week so important. The NFL has moved on, but Cheryl Shepherd has not.

Ms. Shepherd wants to know why her son changed so dramatically. Mainly, she wants the facts to back up what she suspects. The suit alleges that undiagnosed head injuries transformed Jovan Belcher into a different human being. As Patrick Hruby writes in an excellent piece at Sports on Earth, the lawsuit "describes Belcher as a 'loving father, son, teammate and advocate for victims of domestic violence' who ended up suffering 'severe and persistent headaches, [post-concussion syndrome], depression, mood swings, explosivity, suicidal ideations, irresistible and insane impulses' and 'neurologic dysfunction such as [chronic traumatic encephalopathy]."

The neurological changes to Jovan Belcher were aided and abetted by a culture of harassment and bullying directed, the lawsuit contends, from the highest levels of team management.

Shepherd's legal team writes that "General Manager Scott Pioli and other agents of Defendant Kansas City Chiefs often berated Decedent, telling him on numerous occasions, that, 'he was just an accident, and they would get rid of him.' The Defendants constant bullying pressure and stress coupled with Decedent's occupational neurological impairments caused or contributed to cause Decedent to become insane ..."

Ms. Shepherd cannot rectify in her mind the fact that her son, Jovan Belcher, the killer of Kasandra Perkins, was once upon a time an advocate against violence against women. While at the University of Maine, Belcher was part of the organization Male Athletes Against Violence. Men enlisted in the struggle to stop violence against women are profoundly less likely to be violent against their own partners. Yet Belcher shot Perkins nine times, with his mother and child in the house. This was a different person, and Ms. Shepherd wants to know why.

That is exactly why the NFL should be nervous. Cheryl Shepherd, it appears, wants answers more than she wants a payout. In August 2013, more than 4,500 former NFL players suing the NFL for concussion negligence chose to settle out of court for \$765 million. The deal indemnified the NFL against future class action law suits and ensured that no one would have access to the NFL's own research on the effects of head injuries in their sport. But for Cheryl Shepherd, as Hruby writes, this is less a money grab than an "information grab." She wants to go to trial, and if her suit is allowed to move forward, we will all get what the previous settlement denied us: a discovery process under oath. Harassing players to take the field with head injuries, under threat of losing their jobs, should not go unpunished. If Scott Pioli used what can only be described as his "class leverage" to compel Jovan Belcher to wreck his own brain, then he needs to be held to account.

The Belcher murder is a tragedy that speaks to everything the NFL attempts to hide in its skeleton-stuffed closet: guns, violence against women, and the looming possibility that head injuries could have contributed to Belcher's deadly behavior. Attempting to rip it out of our collective memories is an obscenity. Kasandra Perkins is not a Heisman Trophy. If the truths about Belcher's murder suicide are inconvenient for the NFL, then so be it.

2014 CIAA Basketball Championship Tickets Available

A Limited Number of All-Session Tickets are on sale to the Public

Hampton, Va. — January 10, 2014 - All-Session Tickets for the 2014 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association's (CIAA®) Men's and Women's Basketball Tournament will go on sale to the general public through TicketMaster on Saturday, January 11 at 10 a.m. ET. The 2014 CIAA Basketball Championship will take place for the ninth year in Charlotte, N.C., at the Time Warner Cable Arena from Monday, February 24 - Saturday, March 1. A limited quantity of All-Session ticket packages are available. To purchase tickets, fans may order online at: <http://goo.gl/j0Pocj> or by phone at 800-745-3000.

A single buyer may purchase a maximum of eight (8) All-Session Tickets.

All-Session tickets begin at \$50 each.

The 2014 Tournament will feature all 12 CIAA men's and women's teams, vying for two spots in the NCAA Tournament.

Twenty-two (22) games will be played over the course of the week to crown the Conference champions.

For the updated tournament schedule, check online.

"It will be an action-packed week of men's and women's basketball, in addition to our Fan Experience and other fam-

ily-friendly activities that accompany the event," said Commissioner Jacque Carpenter. "We are encouraging fans to purchase their tickets early to ensure they are able to cheer for their favorite CIAA team."

About the CIAA

Founded in 1912, the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) is the oldest African-American athletic conference and one of the largest Division II conferences in the country. The CIAA conducts 16 championships attended by more than 150,000 fans from around the country. Headquartered in Hampton,

Va., the CIAA is governed by the Presidents and Chancellors of its 12 member-institutions: Bowie State University, Chowan University, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, The Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, Livingstone College, St. Augustine's University, Shaw University, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University and Winston-Salem State University.

For more information on the CIAA, visit theciaa.com, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

PGCPS Kicks Off Specialty Program Lottery

UPPER MARLBORO, MD — The Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Specialty Program lottery is accepting online applications through Wednesday, March 12, at 5 p.m.

Specialty Programs offer innovative and creative learning opportunities for students and were designed as an enhancement of choice for the community. Program choices include Creative and Performing Arts (Grades K-5 enter

through the lottery process; Grades 6-8 require auditions and a different application), French Immersion and Spanish Immersion/Dual Language (students entering kindergarten), Talented and Gifted (student must be TAG identified), and Montessori (pre-school students).

Through the PGCPS lottery process, parents and students have an opportunity to secure an available seat in one of the Specialty Programs at

selected schools throughout the county. Admission is governed by a random placement lottery that will be held on March 25, 2014, and admissions are open to all students who are residents of Prince George's County. Specialty Programs have specific boundaries and all school assignments through the lottery are based on the student's home address. Students selected through the lottery will be notified by mail, and lottery outcomes

will be available online at: www1.pgcps.org/lottery/.

Other programs not part of this lottery process also offer innovative educational options for students, including Visual and Performing Arts, Creative and Performing Arts (for Grades 6-8), and the International Baccalaureate Program.

Public charter schools offer more choices for families. Applications are currently being accepted through January 31, 2014.

Calendar of Events

January 23 — January 29, 2014

First Tuesdays At Abraham Hall

Date & Time: Monthly, First Tuesdays
Description: Abraham Hall, constructed in 1889, is the best example of an African American benevolent society lodge in Prince George's County. Located in the community of Rossville, it is the first African American historic site in the county to be fully restored using public funds. Home of M-NCPPC's Black History Program, please call the number listed below for more information about the First Tuesday program.
Ages: All ages
Location: *Abraham Hall*
 7612 Old Muirkirk Road, Beltsville 20705
Contact: 240-264-3415; TTY 301-699-2544

Senior Days

Date and Time: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 8 am-12 noon
Description: Seniors (Prince George's County residents only) are allowed FREE use of both the fitness center and pool during these times.
Cost: FREE
Ages: 60 & up
Location: *Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex*
 8001 Sheriff Road
 Landover, MD 20785
Contact: 301-583-2400; TTY 301-583-2483

Charmed Fashion Show

Date and Time: Saturday, January 25, 2014 2-3 pm
Description: Come see for yourself the results that the 'Charmed' program can give kids! This fashion show will give benefits such as self-esteem, poise, etiquette and manners.
Cost: Free
Ages: 4-14
Location: *Baden Community Center*
 13601 Baden-Westwood Road, Brandywine 20613
Contact: 301-888-1500; TTY 301-203-6030

31st Annual Choreographers' Showcase

Date and Time: Saturday, January 25, 2014 3 pm & 8 pm
Description: Enjoy a gala concert in the Dance Theater, featuring original dance works by area choreographers! Each performance is selected by adjudicators Sidra Bell and Zvi Goetheiner.
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: *Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (University of Maryland)*
 Rte 193 and Stadium Drive, College Park 20742
Contact: For tickets, call the box office at 301-405-ARTS
 For other information, call 301-446-3238; TTY 301-446-6802

Afternoon Aviators

Date & Time: Fridays, 2-4 pm
Description: Join us for fun, hands-on aviation-themed activities. A weekly series for children ages five and up. To schedule a group larger than 10, please call the museum to make a private group reservation.
Cost: FREE with museum admission
Ages: 5 & up
Location: *College Park Aviation Museum*
 1985 Cpl. Frank Scott Drive, College Park 20740
Contact: 301-864-6029; TTY 301-699-2544

Annual Bridal Show

Date & Time: Sunday, January 26, 2014 1-4 pm
Description: Experience every aspect of planning your wedding at the Bridal Show! Meet with the experts from wedding coordinators, photographers to bakers and more that will help you create a stress-free, memorable day!
Cost: Resident \$5; Non-Resident \$5 (Admission is payable at the door)
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: *Newton White Mansion*
 2708 Enterprise Road, Mitchellville 20721
Contact: 301-249-2004; TTY 301-446-6802

Speaker Series: January 2014 - The Story of Sprawl - A collection of historic films that show how America has changed shape.

This 2-disc set is an unprecedented visual document of how sprawl happened, told through a series of historic films ranging from 1939's *The City*, created by famed planner Lewis Mumford, to *No Time For Ugliness* from 1965, produced by the American Institute of Architects. With specially-recorded commentary from notable authors, academics and architects like James Howard Kunstler, Andrés Duany, Jacky Grimshaw, and many more. In planning circles, it is fashionable to debate the merits or drawbacks of the spread of suburban living that happened in the 20th century. What isn't up for debate is that it happened- that from the early '40s until the beginning of the 21st century, the American pattern of development changed radically. We will be viewing and discussing DISC 1, comprising:
 The Story of Sprawl (3 mins.)
 Introduction by Tim Halbur of Congress for the New Urbanism Chapter 1 - *The City, 1939* (31:10 mins.)
 Commentary by: James Howard Kunstler, author of *The Geography of Nowhere* and Duncan Crary of Institute for Humanist Studies
 Chapter 2 - *Cities: How They Grow, 1952* (9:08 mins.)
 Commentary by: Anthony Flint, author of *This Land: The Battle over Sprawl and the Future of America*
 Chapter 3 - *Homes for Veterans, 1946* (Edited, 13:53 mins.)
 Commentary by: Mark D. Van Ells, author of *To Hear Only Thunder Again: America's World War II Veterans Come Home*
 Chapter 4 - *For the Living, 1949* (21:09 mins.)
 Commentary by: Prof. Jackie Leavitt and Prof. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris of UCLA's Dept. of Urban Planning
Date/Time: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 at 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Location: *Board Room, 4th Floor, County Administration Building (CAB), 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772*
CM: N/A
Speaker(s):

Instructor(s)

Biography:
 Speaker Series Team

EARTH TALK ... "America's Great Outdoors Initiative"

Dear EarthTalk:

What is the Obama administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative and what does it hope to accomplish?

— Doug St. James, New York, NY

President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum in April 2010 establishing the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to promote and support innovative community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and reconnect Americans to the outdoors. The Memorandum calls for collaboration among the Departments of Interior and Agriculture as well as the Environmental Protection Agency and the White House's own Council on Environmental Quality in leading the initiative. Eight other federal agencies play a supporting role—and literally thousands of other partners from state, local and tribal governments, non-profits and the private sector are involved as well. Getting young people, especially city kids, into the outdoors to experience our country's unique natural heritage is a top priority of America's Great Outdoors.

Before pursuing any specific strategies, initiative leaders solicited feedback from everyday Americans as to what mattered most to them regarding conservation and access to the out-

doors. Some 105,000 written comments and many more spoken ones from "listening sessions" held coast to coast streamed in and were crucial to the development of programs. Public feedback continues to shape the initiative's agenda.

Some of the programs that fall under the umbrella of America's Great Outdoors include: the Veterans Fire Corps, which employs veterans in forest fire management; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's program providing technical training and work opportunities for underserved youth in habitat restoration and fisheries monitoring; and the establishment of a new network of "water trails" coast to coast to increase everyone's access to the outdoors.

America's Great Outdoors was in the news recently when Interior Secretary Sally Jewell announced the launch of 21st Century Conservation Service Corps as part of the program. "21CSC," as Jewell calls it, aims to be a modern incarnation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) that President Franklin Roosevelt used to help put Americans back to work during the Great Depression. Jewell envisions a 100,000 person strong "CCC 2.0" that will provide opportunities for thousands of young Americans—6.7 million of whom are currently unemployed or not in school—and veterans transitioning back to civilian life to serve their



CREDIT: TEAM ST. LOUIS

President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative seeks to promote and support community efforts to conserve natural spaces and reconnect Americans to the outdoors.

country, feel proud of what they are accomplishing and improve their own lives and the lives of others around them.

Part of what makes America's Great Outdoors unique is that partners from every sector of American society—not just the federal government—are encouraged to help. 21CSC is partially funded by a \$1 million dollar donation from clothing retailer American Eagle Outfitters, and Jewell is in search of another \$19 million from other private sector partners to turn the program into a potent force for reducing youth and veteran unemployment while giving our endangered lands and waterways some much-needed attention.

Environmentalists may be disappointed that the Obama administration hasn't been able to muscle through mandatory greenhouse gas emissions cuts

and put sustainability concerns at the forefront of the policymaking process, but getting unprecedented numbers of Americans involved in conservation projects that protect the nation's treasured natural heritage is a worthy conservation legacy in its own right. The program is sure to positively impact generations of Americans for decades to come.

CONTACTS: America's Great Outdoors, www.doi.gov/americas-greatoutdoors/; 21CSC, www.doi.gov/21csc/. EarthTalk® is written and edited by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of E - The Environmental Magazine (www.emagazine.com). Send questions to: earthtalk@emagazine.com.

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A redirection of the "War on Drugs"

The "War on Drugs" has gone in many directions since its official introduction by President Richard Nixon in 1971.

Domestically, what initially was a general focus on marijuana in the 1970s, turned into removing users of crack cocaine from the streets during the 1980s.

In the 1990s, the direction shifted back toward low-level marijuana possession arrests. According to FBI data, arrest numbers spiked across the country, rising from 213,453 in 1990, to 462,846 by 1999, an increase of more than 116 percent.

This increase in arrests was especially apparent in Maryland. From 1990-1999, the same FBI data show the number of marijuana possession arrests in Maryland rose from 6,278 to 16,184, an increase of more than 157 percent.

The acceleration of statewide arrest numbers began to plateau in the new century. But not in Baltimore.

The 2000s, O'Malley and the rise of Compstat

From 2000-2007, Maryland's overall marijuana possession arrest rate rose by 4,916 arrests per year, or 28 percent statewide.

During the same time period, Baltimore's marijuana arrest rate surged by 3,686 arrests per year - more than 155 percent.

O'Malley was elected Baltimore mayor in 1999 in a landslide victory, replacing former Mayor Kurt Schmoke.

O'Malley ran on an anti-crime platform, advocating for "zero tolerance" policing. As a Baltimore city councilman, O'Malley studied the drop in crime in New York City after "zero tolerance" was implemented and pushed for Baltimore to adopt the same policy.

"Zero tolerance" is a policing strategy that increases the focus on minor, non-violent offenses. The idea is based on the "broken windows" theory, which says if minor offenses are not met with

strict enforcement, overall crime will increase.

"Upon taking office, Baltimore averaged 300-plus murders annually and the city was rapidly losing ground in the war on drugs on its street corners," O'Malley's office said in an emailed statement in response to questions from Capital News Service.

O'Malley's first duty as mayor was to find a new police commissioner.

In an attempt to mirror New York City's crime reduction, O'Malley hired Ed Norris, a 20-year veteran of the New York City Police Department.

Phyllis McDonald, an associate professor in the Division of Public Safety Leadership at Johns Hopkins University, and author of *Managing Police Operations: Implementing the New York Crime Control Model — CompStat*, said part of the reason O'Malley brought Norris in was to set up a CompStat system for Baltimore.

This new statistics-driven system was based on police department accountability and created a mapping system of crime type and location.

Norris lasted until 2002 as police commissioner. O'Malley, committed to the New York technique of crime-fighting, replaced Norris with former NYPD Deputy Chief Kevin Clark. Clark had been on the department's Organized Crime Control Bureau's Narcotics Division.

Maj. Neill Franklin, a retired officer of both the Baltimore Police Department and Maryland State Police Department, said Clark felt strongly about curbing drugs on the street.

"I remember him (Clark) saying that our main crime problem in the streets was drugs and that we were going to hit that hard and make more drug-related arrests," Franklin said.

Franklin said Clark created the "Organized Crime Division" which was basically a narcotics team of more than 300 officers.

"In addition to personnel, he strengthened the unit with other resources to go out and target drug dealers and drug users throughout the city," Franklin said.

Franklin is now executive director of Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, a nonprofit organization of current and former law enforcement and criminal justice workers who advocate for changes in current U.S. drug policies. He also worked as head of training at the Baltimore Police Department and as regional commander for the Bureau of Drugs and Criminal Enforcement in both the Baltimore and Maryland State Police departments.

O'Malley and his new New York City style of crime-fighting watched as Baltimore alone accounted for 75 percent of the increase in the marijuana arrest rate in Maryland.

"There is undoubtedly a correlation between higher petty marijuana possession arrest rates and the CompStat and "zero tolerance" policies brought in by O'Malley," Franklin said.

O'Malley's office argues the policies were necessary because of the level of crime at the time.

"Then-Mayor O'Malley took steps he felt were necessary to ensure the safety and security of one of the most crime-ridden cities in the nation," O'Malley's office said in an emailed statement.

The Baltimore Police Department dropped "zero tolerance" in 2007, the year O'Malley left for state office, but "stop and frisk" techniques still live on.

"Stop and frisk" is a controversial technique that allows officers to stop people at will under suspicion that they may be carrying a concealed weapon. Currently, Franklin said there is a stronger focus on getting guns off the street. But even if an officer's main focus is searching a person for weapons, suspicion of marijuana possession is a great tool for law enforcement to initiate a "stop and frisk" on a person walking the streets.

However, with society shifting to a more marijuana-tolerant mentality, "stop and frisk" could become harder to initiate for police.

"It's a very lively conversation in close police circles," Franklin said. "They're saying, 'How are we going to search people at will if we lose marijuana (to legalization)?'"

Potential changes in Maryland

Times are changing. States like Washington and Colorado have legalized recreational use of the drug, and more states are jumping on the decriminalization bandwagon.

Maryland looked like it was starting to open up when the state passed a medical marijuana bill last year, however, the final bill was relatively conservative, as it only created a commission to oversee medical marijuana programs at academic medical research centers that choose to participate.

But according to a recent poll conducted by Democratic-affiliated Public Policy Polling, 68 percent of Marylanders support decriminalization. Fifty-three percent support legalization similar to Colorado and Washington.

Decriminalization bills are being reintroduced in Maryland by Sen. Zirkin and Sen. Allan Kittleman, R-Howard, after failing to come to a vote in the House last year. In addition, Senate President Thomas V. "Mike" Miller Jr. told *The Washington Post* in an interview recently that he favors regulated legalization.

Gubernatorial candidate Delegate Heather Mizeur, D-Montgomery County, also favors legalizing, regulating and taxing marijuana.

But O'Malley said Wednesday on the "Annapolis Summit" radio broadcast of the Marc Steiner show that he is against legalization.

"I'm not much in favor of it ... because I've seen what drug addiction has done to the people of our state," O'Malley said during the show. "I also know that this drug, and its use — its abuse — can be a gateway to even more harmful behavior."

Franklin said that without changes from the top, policing culture is not likely to change.

"Law enforcement and officers get in the groove of doing something," Franklin said. "And if society begins to make adjustments, law enforcement tends to be the last to make that change."

"Change needs to come from the top."

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