

STATE OF DELAWARE



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
DOVER

**EXECUTIVE ORDER  
NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR**

**TO: HEADS OF ALL STATE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

**RE: MAKING DELAWARE A TRAUMA-INFORMED STATE**

**WHEREAS**, the Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study identified that childhood exposure to traumatic experiences increases the likelihood of physical and psychological illness later in life. Those childhood experiences are: physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; physical or emotional neglect; household dysfunction, including substance abuse, untreated mental illness, or incarceration of a household member; domestic violence; and separation/divorce involving household members; and

**WHEREAS**, a study published in September 2018 in the Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics – the largest ACEs study ever conducted, sampling over 200,000 adults across 23 states – documented that 25% of the respondents reported exposure to 3 or more ACEs and 16% were exposed to 4 or more ACEs, with higher exposures noted among: people of color; those who identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual; those of lower economic means; and those with less than a high school education; and

**WHEREAS**, a 2015 survey of Delaware adults indicated that 14% were exposed to 4 or more ACEs and were: 8 times more likely to have been diagnosed with a mental health condition; nearly 7 times more likely to have been diagnosed with a substance abuse problem; and 4.6 times more likely to be in fair or poor health; and

**WHEREAS**, Delaware's ACEs data indicated that 23% of children from birth to age 18 were exposed to 2 or more ACEs, and that those children were 5 times more likely to be reported in fair or poor health; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the average lifetime cost for each victim of abuse and neglect was \$210,012, including child and adult healthcare costs, and productivity losses. The lifetime costs associated with just one year of confirmed cases of child maltreatment was approximately \$124 billion; and

**WHEREAS**, research has shown that prevention of prolonged exposure to toxic stress, early intervention, trauma-specific treatment, and building resilience of children and families –

which can be promoted through trauma-responsive care – can mitigate the impact of ACEs and produce better health, educational, and community outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, a core component of resilience is promoting healthy social-emotional development in children and families; and

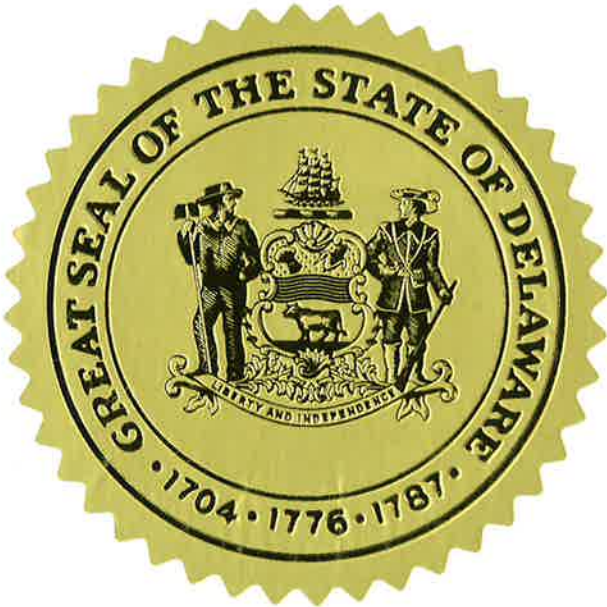
**WHEREAS**, creating trauma-responsive communities, organizations, and schools will help Delaware become a healthier state, which may help reduce healthcare costs and emergency room visits.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN C. CARNEY**, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Delaware, do hereby **DECLARE** and **ORDER** the following:

1. The Family Services Cabinet Council shall lead efforts to ensure that Delaware becomes a trauma-informed state by:
  - a. Developing a Trauma-Informed Care toolkit of resources that: provide trauma awareness and self-care education for state employees; increase recognition of signs of ACEs exposure; and offer effective interventions to mitigate trauma and build resilience to be shared across all state agencies and organizations for use at service delivery access points.
  - b. Promoting a Trauma Awareness Month in Delaware with appropriate events to be held across the state.
  - c. Sharing information with state employees and community partners on educational and professional development opportunities related to ACEs and building resilience.
  - d. Creating a recognition program for champions of this work, which may include individuals, divisions within an agency, and community partners, such as schools and school districts.
  - e. Identifying gaps in available services or service capacity along the prevention and early intervention-treatment continuum for children and their caregivers statewide.
  - f. Developing a comprehensive plan focused on early intervention for children and their caregivers exposed to adverse childhood experiences in order to help prevent abuse and neglect, and remedy the impact of it.
  - g. Coordinating the collection, evaluation, and reporting of Delaware ACEs data.
2. All state agencies that provide services for children and adults shall integrate trauma-informed best practices, which will include (but are not limited to):
  - a. Offering regularly scheduled training to staff to increase their knowledge about the impact of ACEs and toxic stress on short-term and long-term health outcomes.
  - b. Promoting strategies to enhance staff resilience and self-care.
  - c. Using trauma-specific language in requests for proposals and in service contracts with providers, when appropriate.

- d. Implementing evidence-informed services to prevent and respond to toxic stress and build resilience in children, adults, and communities.

APPROVED this 17<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2018.



John C. Carney  
John C. Carney  
Governor

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
Secretary of State