

~~(H) CONTAINS INFORMATION ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES.~~

~~(2) "CENTRAL REGISTRY" INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING, WHETHER OR NOT LOCATED CENTRALLY:~~

~~(i) A MANUAL OR AUTOMATED DATA FILE; AND~~

~~(ii) ALL REPORTS AND RECORDS OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT MAINTAINED BY A LOCAL DEPARTMENT OR THE DEPARTMENT.~~

#### Article 88A - Social Services Administration

6.

(a) Except in accordance with a court order or to an authorized officer or employee of the State, or the United States, or a fiduciary institution having a right thereto in an official capacity, and as necessary to discharge responsibilities to administer public assistance, medical assistance, or social services programs, it shall be unlawful for any person or persons to divulge or make known in any manner any information concerning any applicant for or recipient of social services, child welfare services, cash assistance, food stamps, or medical assistance, directly or indirectly derived from the records, papers, files, investigations or communications of the State, county or city, or subdivisions or agencies thereof, or acquired in the course of the performance of official duties.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in Title 5, Subtitle 7 of the Family Law Article, all records and reports concerning child abuse or neglect are confidential, and their unauthorized disclosure is a criminal offense subject to the penalty set out in subsection (e) of this section. Information contained in reports or records concerning child abuse or neglect may be disclosed only:

(1) Under a court order;

(2) To personnel of local or State departments of social services, law enforcement personnel, and members of multidisciplinary case consultation teams, who are investigating a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect or who are providing services to a child or family that is the subject of the report;

(3) To local or State officials responsible for the administration of the child protective service as necessary to carry out their official functions;

(4) To a person who is the alleged child abuser or the person who is suspected of child neglect if that person is responsible for the child's welfare and provisions are made for the protection of the identity of the reporter or any other person whose life or safety is likely to be endangered by disclosing the information;

(5) To a licensed practitioner who, or an agency, institution, or program which is providing treatment or care to a child who is the subject of a report of child abuse or neglect; or