



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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May 17, 2018

Raising the Bar: A Vision for Improving Mandated Reporting Practices in the Commonwealth

A Report by the House Committee on Post Audit and Oversight

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May 17, 2018

Steven 'I'. James, Clerk
Massachusetts House of Representatives
State House, Room 145
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Clerk James,

I am pleased to present a report by the House Committee on Post Audit and Oversight entitled, *Raising the Bar: A Vision for Improving Mandated Reporting Practices in the Commonwealth*.

The report presents the 190th Committee's findings, as well as recommendations for the Massachusetts Legislature to enhance its policies and practices relative to mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect in the Commonwealth.

It is the Committee's collective hope that this report serves as a catalyst for robust discussion among our colleagues, and that our policy recommendations are considered in any new mandated reporting legislation enacted by the Massachusetts Legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Linsky', written in a cursive style.

David P. Linsky
Chairman, House Committee on Post Audit and Oversight

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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State Representative Kay Khan, House Chair, The Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities

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INTRODUCTION

Every day, the safety and welfare of thousands of children across Massachusetts are threatened by child abuse and neglect. Preventing child maltreatment through effective intervention is not the sole responsibility of any single government entity or professional group, but rather involves a shared community effort. It was with this duty in mind that the House Committee on Post Audit and Oversight conducted a review of the policies and practices governing mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect in Massachusetts.

In the wake of a national child sexual abuse scandal involving prominent figures associated with USA Gymnastics (USAG), the House Committee on Post Audit and Oversight launched an inquiry into mandated reporting protections for children enrolled in privately-operated athletic programs in Massachusetts. During the course of this investigation, the Committee analyzed the Commonwealth's existing mandated reporting statutes, researched available documentation and literature, surveyed the child protection policies of other states, gathered data, and met with officials from the Department of Children and Families and the Office of the Child Advocate. We were alarmed to discover that coaches and other personnel employed by private athletic organizations are not required to act as mandated reporters under current Massachusetts law.

It was through the Committee's conversations with state child welfare officials that another concerning matter was brought to our attention: Massachusetts has not developed or implemented a training system to educate mandated reporters on recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. This issue is particularly troubling because mandated reporters who are professionally licensed by the state are required by law to complete training.

While the Committee agrees that there are likely several other aspects of our mandated reporting laws worthy of renewed legislative scrutiny, we believe that urgent action is required to address protections for youth athletes, as well as mandated reporter training. We

therefore focused our review and subsequent recommendations on these two areas of concern.

OVERVIEW OF MANDATED REPORTING IN MASSACHUSETTS

All fifty states and the District of Columbia have laws governing the filing of and response to reports of child abuse and neglect. In Massachusetts, this is known as the “51A Law.”¹ Mandated reporters are those individuals required by Massachusetts law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the state’s Department of Children and Families (DCF). DCF’s mandate is to protect children from abuse and neglect, and ensure that each child has a safe, permanent, and nurturing home.² Due to the nature of their profession, mandated reporters are often the first adults to recognize the signs of or be told about child abuse and neglect.³ The failure to report crimes and incidences of suspected abuse and neglect against children can result in severe consequences for the alleged victim and other potential victims. If no intervention occurs, the frequency and severity of maltreatment experienced by the victim are likely to increase over time, and often results in other children being abused and neglected.⁴ Since there are high risks associated with not intervening, mandated reporters are held to a higher standard of legal responsibility and may receive penalties of up to \$1,000 for failing to make required oral and written reports to DCF.⁵ For “willfully failing” to report child abuse or neglect that results in serious bodily injury or death, mandated reporters can face a fine of up to \$5,000 and imprisonment of up to 2 ½ years.⁶

¹ “51A Online Mandated Reported Training by Middlesex Children’s Advocacy Center.”
<http://51a.middlesexcac.org/>.

² DCF’s Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting: A Guide for Mandated Reporters:
https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/11/30/Mandated%20Reporter%27s%20Guide_FINAL_2016.pdf

³ 51A Online Mandated Reported Training by Middlesex Children’s Advocacy Center.”

⁴ “Consequences | Child Abuse and Neglect | Violence Prevention | Injury Center | CDC.”
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/consequences.html>.

⁵ M.G.L. Ch. 119, § 51A

⁶ M.G.L. Ch. 119, § 51A

Under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 119, Section 51A, mandated reporters are required to immediately make an oral report to DCF when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering from abuse and/or neglect (see Appendix A). A written report is to be submitted to DCF within 48 hours after making the oral report.⁷ Mandated reporters are protected from liability in any civil or criminal action and from any discriminatory or retaliatory actions by an employer.⁸ DCF regulations do not allow the Department to disclose the name of a reporter unless ordered by a court or when the Department is required to provide the 51A report to the district attorney or other law enforcement officials.⁹

DCF receives more than 75,000 reports on behalf of children each year.¹⁰ When the Department receives a "51A" report from a mandated reporter or a concerned citizen, it can take action to protect the child, including investigating the allegations, offering services to the child and her or his family, taking custody of the child, and notifying the local district attorney and other state agencies (see Appendix B).¹¹ In certain situations, the Department will immediately notify the district attorney and law enforcement so the agencies can coordinate the investigation.

Mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect has a history of over four decades in Massachusetts. Since its enactment in 1973, the mandated reporting law has been continuously expanded to include more individuals who are in contact with children by virtue of their profession, such as educators, law enforcement officials, and social workers.¹² One of the most recent amendments to the law included adding clergy and other church workers to the list of mandated reporters in 2002, following public outcry over the Roman

⁷ M.G.L. Ch. 119, § 51A

⁸ M.G.L. Ch. 119, § 51A

⁹ DCF's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting: A Guide for Mandated Reporters

¹⁰ DCF's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting: A Guide for Mandated Reporters

¹¹ 51A Online Mandated Reported Training by Middlesex Children's Advocacy Center."

¹² "History." MSPCC. <http://www.mspcc.org/history/>."

Catholic Church's handling of child sexual abuse by clergy.¹³ The Child Welfare Law of 2008 provided extensive changes to the state's child protection laws, including a new requirement, effective January 1, 2010, that all mandated reporters who are professionally licensed through the Commonwealth complete training to recognize and report suspected abuse and neglect.¹⁴ The evolution of mandated reporting policies reflects increased recognition of the crucial role these professionals play in our state's child welfare system.

Professionals Required to Report

M.G.L. Ch. 119, § 21

- Physicians, medical interns, hospital personnel, medical examiners, psychologists, emergency medical technicians, dentists, nurses, chiropractors, podiatrists, optometrists, osteopaths, allied mental health and human services professionals, drug and alcoholism counselors, psychiatrists, or clinical social workers
- Public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors, or child care workers
- Persons paid to care for or work with a child in any public or private facility, home, or program that provides child care or residential services to children
- Persons who provide the services of child care resource and referral agencies, voucher management agencies, family child care systems, or child care food programs
- Licensors of the Department of Early Education and Care or school attendance officers
- Probation officers, clerk-magistrates of a district court, parole officers, social workers, foster parents, firefighters, or police officers
- Priests, rabbis, clergy members, ordained or licensed ministers, leaders of any church or religious body, or accredited Christian Science practitioners
- Persons performing official duties on behalf of a church or religious body that are recognized as the duties of a priest, rabbi, clergy, ordained or licensed minister, leader of any church or religious body, or accredited Christian Science practitioner
- Persons employed by a church or religious body to supervise, educate, coach, train, or counsel a child on a regular basis
- Persons in charge of a medical or other public or private institution, school, or facility or that person's designated agent
- The Child Advocate

Reporting by Other Persons

M.G.L. Ch. 119, § 51A

Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from or has died as a result of abuse or neglect may file a report.

¹³ M.G.L. Ch. 119, § 21

¹⁴ "Session Laws. Chapter 176 of the Acts of 2008. An Act Protecting Children in the Care of the Commonwealth." <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2008/Chapter176>

ARE WE FAILING TO PROTECT YOUTH ATHLETES?

According to reports, over the course of two decades, at least 368 female victims, the majority of whom were minors, were subjected to sexual abuse by coaches, doctors, and other staff affiliated with USAG.¹⁵ Although USAG received reports of the abuse, including complaints made against coaches who trained and abused youth athletes in multiple states, USAG allowed the abuse allegations to remain dormant. A nine-month investigation by *The Indianapolis Star* found that “predatory coaches were allowed to move from gym to gym, undetected by a lax system of oversight, or dangerously passed on by USA Gymnastics-certified gyms.”¹⁶ The alleged abuse and cover up by USAG staff occurred in states across the country, including Michigan, California, Pennsylvania, Texas, Rhode Island, Washington, Florida, Maine, and Indiana.¹⁷

The reports centered around Dr. Larry Nassar, a former USAG national team osteopathic physician, who has been named in hundreds of lawsuits filed by athletes.¹⁸ Since the first allegations were revealed in September 2016, more than 265 women, including several prominent Olympic gymnasts, accused Dr. Nassar of sexually assaulting them under the pretense of providing medical treatment. In January 2018, Dr. Nassar was sentenced to 40 to 175 years in a Michigan state prison after pleading guilty to numerous counts of sexual assault of minors.¹⁹ USAG and officials at Michigan State University—where Dr. Nassar was a faculty member, have been accused of enabling his abuse and are named as defendants in civil lawsuits filed by former gymnasts.²⁰

¹⁵ “A 20-Year Toll: 368 Gymnasts Allege Sexual Exploitation.” *Indystar*.
<https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2016/12/15/20-year-toll-368-gymnasts-allege-sexual-exploitation/95198724/>.

¹⁶ “A 20-Year Toll: 368 Gymnasts Allege Sexual Exploitation.” *Indystar*.

¹⁷ “USA Gymnastics Alerted FBI in 2015 to Doctor Accused of Abuse - Chicago Tribune.”
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/international/ct-usa-gymnastics-fbi-doctor-abuse-20170216-story.html>.

¹⁸ “A 20-Year Toll: 368 Gymnasts Allege Sexual Exploitation.” *Indystar*.

¹⁹ “Larry Nassar: Disgraced US Olympics Doctor Jailed for 175 Years - BBC News.”
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42811304>.

²⁰ “USA Gymnastics Alerted FBI in 2015 to Doctor Accused of Abuse - Chicago Tribune.”

Following these revelations, lawmakers and prosecutors across the country have advocated for expanding mandated reporting laws. Legislation introduced before the California State Assembly would designate college coaches and other university officials as mandated reporters.²¹ Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster proposed making any individual who witnesses sexual abuse a mandated reporter. Officials in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Connecticut, and Georgia have announced plans to review their state's mandated reporting laws.²² In January 2018, the United States Congress passed a bipartisan bill to extend mandatory reporting requirements of child abuse to national governing bodies, like USAG, and affiliated amateur sports organizations.²³

The USAG scandal highlights a glaring loophole in the Commonwealth's mandated reporting law. Like Massachusetts, most of the states involved in the USAG scandal (with the exception of Illinois) do not require persons employed by private athletic organizations to act as mandated reporters. While many states, including Massachusetts, require athletic personnel affiliated with public and private schools to act as mandated reporters, only seven states require the same of those employed by private sports or recreational organizations (see Appendix C). Under existing law, the Commonwealth could not prosecute private athletic coaches or personnel for failing to report suspected child abuse if a similar scandal were to come to light in Massachusetts. More seriously, if DCF is not made aware of suspect abuse, it cannot act to protect children who may be victims of maltreatment.

²¹ "Analysis: Mandatory Reporting Laws Could Harm Children | Reuters."
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-crime-reportinglaws/analysis-mandatory-reporting-laws-could-harm-children-idUSTRE7B01NZ20111201>.

²² "Analysis: Mandatory Reporting Laws Could Harm Children | Reuters."

²³ "Congress Passes Bill to Protect Amateur Athletes from Sex Abuse."
<https://thinkprogress.org/congress-bill-abuse-victims-d50642f8723e/>.

Throughout the country, privatized youth sports teams have grown in number, size, and influence.²⁴ Increasingly, youth athletes are choosing to join private athletic organizations over their school team.²⁵ By not requiring personnel from private athletic organizations to act as mandated reporters, tens of thousands of the Commonwealth's youth athletes are placed at a higher risk of experiencing concealed abuse. The Committee believes it is time for our state to act to protect these children through the enactment of expanded mandated reporting legislation.

THE TRAINING GAP

As discussed in the overview, the Child Welfare Law (CWL) of 2008 required that all professionally licensed mandated reporters complete training to recognize and report suspected child abuse and neglect, effective January 1, 2010.²⁶ Nearly a decade after the passage of the legislation, Massachusetts has not developed or implemented a mandated reporter training program.

The state's Office of the Child Advocate (OCA), which was established under the CWL, has advocated for a standardized online mandated reporter training program since its creation. The CWL required the OCA to examine mandated reporter training as part of a comprehensive plan to address child abuse and neglect. The legislation provided:

(d) The comprehensive plan shall examine the status of and address the following issues:

....

mandated reporting, including: (i) the quality and quantity of training provided to mandated reporters; (ii) standards for training based on best practices for recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect; and (iii) the use of the following as forums for training mandated reporters: online programs, training offered by state agencies, and existing programs of professional training such as those required for

²⁴ Cassidy, Glenn J. "Privatized Youth Sports: Are Youth Being Left Behind." Rutgers University - Graduate School of Education, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.7282/T3C82DG8>.

²⁵ Cassidy, Glenn J. "Privatized Youth Sports: Are Youth Being Left Behind." Rutgers University - Graduate School of Education, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.7282/T3C82DG8>.

²⁶ M.G.J., Ch. 119, § 51A

initial licensure or certification and relicensure or recertification, continuing education programs or in-service training[.]²⁷

While financial and staffing constraints prevented the OCA from formulating a comprehensive plan, the need to implement mandated reporter training was promoted in several of the OCA's annual reports issued under Child Advocate Gail Garinger's leadership.²⁸

The law does not stipulate which, if any, state agency is responsible for conducting the training program, nor has any funding been allocated to support this mandate. The issues impacting the development of a standardized curriculum were highlighted in the OCA's annual report for Calendar Year 2009:

“Following the January 2010 implementation date, the OCA conducted an informal telephone survey of licensing organizations within the state. Staff learned that none of the organizations contacted had begun training mandated reporters, although DPII [the Department of Public Health] was developing a curriculum for emergency medical technicians. DCF area offices and the District Attorneys continued to provide in-person training when requested or when a need was identified.”²⁹

The OCA's 2009 report also highlighted the plans of the state's Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to pilot an online mandated reporter program developed by its human resources training office and based on DCF's mandated reporter training curriculum.³⁰ EOHHS informed the Committee that an online training is currently available on its intranet for exclusive use by EOHHS staff (see Appendix D).

The Middlesex Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), which works in collaboration with the Child Abuse Unit of the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, has operated a free, online

²⁷ M.G.L. Ch. 18C, § 11

²⁸ Office of the Child Advocate Annual Reports for Calendar Years 2008, 2009, 2011, & 2012
<http://www.mass.gov/childadvocate/reports/>

²⁹ “Office of the Child Advocate Annual Report 2009”.

³⁰ “Office of the Child Advocate Annual Report 2009”.

mandated reporter training program since April 2010.³¹ According to the Middlesex CAC, the online training is “designed to satisfy the requirement that mandated reporters who are professionally licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts complete training to recognize and report suspected child abuse and neglect, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A(k).”³² This self-paced training takes approximately 45 minutes to complete and uses video, case studies, and pop quizzes to educate mandated reporters on the basic principles involved with reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

Several states, including Maine, California, New York, Illinois, Missouri, as well as Washington D.C., have established free online public website training programs with mandated reporters. In its 2008 annual report, the OCA outlined the advantages of online training over face-to-face training: it is cost-effective, convenient, standardized, wide-reaching, and easily updated.³³ For instance, Illinois was able to train 15,000 mandated reporters within the first six months of the website’s launch, for an estimated cost of 60 cents per person.³⁴ The trainings currently offered by EOHHS and the Middlesex CAC do not fulfill the need for training that presents standardized curriculum for mandated reporters throughout Massachusetts.³⁵ While additional financial investment may be required to support the development of an online training program, the long-term benefits outweigh these costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation (1): Protecting Youth Athletes

The Massachusetts Legislature should enact legislation to require coaches, administrators, and other staff employed by or volunteering with private athletic organizations to act as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

³¹ “Office of the Child Advocate Annual Report 2011”.

³² “51A Online Mandated Reported Training by Middlesex Children’s Advocacy Center.”

³³ “Office of the Child Advocate Annual Report 2008”.

³⁴ “Office of the Child Advocate Annual Report 2008”.

³⁵ “Office of the Child Advocate Annual Report 2011”.

Recommendation (2): Online Mandated Reporter Training

The Commonwealth should implement a standardized online mandated reporter training in which an EOHHS-approved curriculum is developed in conjunction with other stakeholders. This training should provide mandated reporters with the basic principles involved with reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. The Committee envisions an online training that is offered for free, so that no child-serving professional is deterred from learning about their legal and ethical responsibilities as a mandated reporter. The state should work with its various licensing bodies to develop a training certification system for those professionals who are required by law to complete mandated reporter training.

CONCLUSION

Child abuse and neglect are among society's most heinous crimes. The implementation of our recommendations will ensure that adults who are responsible for the safety of the Commonwealth's children are adequately trained and held accountable for preventing and reporting any allegation of abuse or neglect. Over the last several years, Massachusetts has made significant strides—through modernized policies and greater fiscal investment—to bolster its child welfare system. Strengthening protections for youth athletes, and implementing a standardized online mandated reporter training program, will continue our state's progress in this critical effort.

APPENDIX A

How does DCF define abuse and neglect?

Under DCF Regulations: 110 CMR, Section 2.00

Abuse means: The non-accidental commission of any act by a caregiver which causes, or creates a substantial risk of physical or emotional injury or sexual abuse to a child; or the victimization of a child through sexual abuse or human trafficking, human trafficking, regardless if the person responsible is a caregiver. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e. abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting). DCF defines "sexual abuse" as any non-accidental act by a caregiver upon a child that constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth or any sexual contact between a caregiver and a child for whom the caregiver is responsible.

Neglect means: Failure by a caregiver, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to take actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care, including malnutrition or failure to thrive; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition.

Physical Injury means: Death; or a fracture of a bone, a subdural hematoma, burns, impairment of any organ, and any other such nontrivial injury; or soft tissue swelling or skin bruising, depending upon such factors are the child's age, circumstances under which the injury occurred and the number and location of bruises.

Emotional Injury means: An impairment to or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within normal range of performance and behavior.

APPENDIX B

What happens when DCF receives a report of child abuse and/or neglect?

When DCF receives a report of abuse and/or neglect, called a "51A report," from either a mandated reporter or another concerned citizen, DCF is required to evaluate the allegations and determine the safety of the children. During DCF's response process, all mandated reporters are required to answer the Department's questions and provide information to assist in determining whether a child is being abused and/or neglected and in assessing the child's safety in the household.

Here are the steps in the Child Protective Services (CPS) process:

1. **The report is screened.** The purpose of the screening process is to gather sufficient information to determine whether the allegation meets the Department's criteria for suspected abuse and/or neglect, whether there is immediate danger to the safety of a child, whether DCF involvement is warranted and how best to target the Department's initial response. The Department begins its screening process immediately upon receipt of a report. During the screening process DCF obtains information from the person filing the report and also contacts professionals involved with the family, such as doctors or teachers who may be able to provide information about the child's condition. DCF may also contact the family if appropriate.

2. **If the report is "Screened-In", it is assigned for a Child Protective Services (CPS) Response** to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused and/or neglected. "Reasonable cause to believe" means a collection of facts, knowledge or observations which tend to support or are consistent with the allegations and when viewed in light of the surrounding circumstances and the credibility of the persons providing the information, would lead a reasonable person to conclude that a child has been abused or neglected. The Response includes an investigation of the validity of the allegation(s) received, a determination of current danger and future risk to the child and an assessment of the capacity of the parent(s)/caregiver(s) to provide for the safety, permanency and well-being of their child.

3. A determination is made as to whether the report is:

- **"Unsupported"** - There is not reasonable cause to believe that the child was abused and/or neglected or that the child's safety or well-being was compromised; or
- **"Supported"** - There is reasonable cause to believe the child was abused and/or neglected; the actions or inactions by the parent(s)/caregiver(s) place the child in danger or pose substantial risk to the child's safety or well-being, or the person was responsible for the child being a victim of sexual exploitation or human trafficking; or
- **"Substantiated Concern"** - There is reasonable cause to believe that the child was neglected and the actions or inactions by the parent(s)/caregiver(s) create the potential for abuse and/or neglect, but there is not immediate danger to the child's safety or well-being.
- DCF also determines whether Department intervention is needed to safeguard the safety and well-being of the children in the home. If DCF involvement continues, a Family Assessment and Action Plan are developed with the family.

Source: DCF's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting: A Guide for Mandated Reporters

APPENDIX C
States with Athletic Personnel as Mandated Reporters:

Colorado

Rev. Stat. § 19-3-304

Directors, coaches, assistant coaches, or athletic program personnel employed (compensated) by private sports organizations or programs

Georgia

Ann. Code §§ 19-7-5; 16-12-100

Child service organization personnel (includes any organization—whether public, private, for-profit, not-for-profit, or voluntary—that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children)

Hawaii

Rev. Stat. § 350-1.1

Employees of any public or private agency providing recreational or sports activities

Illinois

Comp. Stat. Ch. 325, § 5/4; Ch. 720, § 5/11-20.2

Recreational or athletic program or facility personnel

Louisiana

Children's Code Art. 603(17)

Coaches; administrators, employees, or volunteers of any youth recreation programs ; school coaches, including, but not limited to, public technical or vocational school, community college, college, or university coaches and coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics

Virginia

Ann. Code § 63.2-1509

Athletic coaches, directors, or other persons age 18 or older employed by or volunteering with private sports organizations or teams & administrators or employees age 18 or older of public or private youth recreation programs

West Virginia

Ann. Code § 49-2-803

Athletic coaches, directors, or other persons age 18 or older employed by or volunteering with private sports organizations or team

Source: The United States Children's Bureau ³⁶

³⁶ "Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect," n.d., 61.
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/manda.pdf>

APPENDIX D: EOHHS Mandated Reporter Training

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.pace.state.ma.us/Training/MSR/MSR.html>. The page header includes the PACE logo and navigation links such as Home, About, Contact Us, and Training. A sidebar on the left lists various center services: ADMINISTRATION, CONFERENCE & MEDIA CENTER, LEARNING CARE, LIBRARY, PERSONALING, STUDENT LEARNING CENTER, and TRAINING CENTER. The main content area is titled "Mandated Reporter for Child Abuse and Neglect eLearning".

Description:
Massachusetts General Laws (Ch. 119, Sect. 51A) defines Mandated Reporters as a broad range of professionals who share an interest and responsibility for the safety, well-being, and permanency of children in the Commonwealth. Mandated Reporters have a legal and ethical obligation to report any concern that a child is being abused or neglected to the Department of Children and Families. This eLearning program serves to inform human service professionals about their role as Mandated Reporters. Upon completion of this program, participants will understand the definition, the importance of mandated reporting, and the duties of a Mandated Reporter. Further, participants will be better able to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect, learn how to respond, and understand what happens after a report is filed.

Select the **Take Course** button to begin the course described above, or click **Return** to go back to the online course listing.

[Take Course](#) [Browse Course](#) [Review Course](#)

[Return to Course Listing](#)

At the bottom of the page, there are links for [Child Resources](#), [Course Catalog](#), [Learning Tools](#), and [Home & Navigation](#).

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