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Community Mental Retardation

Community mental retardation services, which include mandated and entitlement services, are supervised by the state and administered by county programs. County programs have been sustaining community mental retardation services without a cost of living increase for four years. The additional costs of services not fully funded result in increased county costs and/or loss of services to vulnerable citizens. Other critical aspects of community mental retardation services include the changes necessary to maintain federal funding of the Medicaid waivers and waiting list needs as detailed below.

Medicaid Waivers are in danger. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is enforcing rules that require significant change. Over 80 percent of the funding for community services is via a CMS waiver. All waiver recipients are required to be served to full level of need at an approximate cost of \$15 million in state funds. This amount is sufficient for administrative and service dollars to meet the existing rules that are being more strictly enforced by CMS.

The Mental Retardation Waiting List represents the individuals requesting services throughout the Commonwealth. As of November 2006 there were 22,508 individuals on the list. The waiting list includes 3,733 individuals on the emergency list, 9,479 individuals on the critical list and 9,296 individuals on the planning list. Cost to serve the emergency waiting list is approximately \$49 million in new state dollars. Cost to address the waiting list in its entirety, through a multi-year plan, is approximately \$600 million.

For more information on community mental retardation services, contact Michael Chambers at 717-232-7554 x3120, or mchamber@pacounties.org.

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