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The Washington Post

July 15, 1989, Saturday, Final Edition

**SECTION:** METRO; PAGE B1

**LENGTH:** 772 words

**HEADLINE:** Md. Facility for Retarded Faces Losing Medicaid Funds;  
Institution Cited for Inadequate Protection

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**BODY:**

Great Oaks Center in Silver Spring, a state-run residential institution for the retarded, has been threatened with a cutoff of its \$ 9 million Medicaid funding for failing to meet newly toughened federal treatment standards.

In findings issued in late May by Maryland licensing and certification officials, the institution was cited for not protecting adequately some of its 312 residents, failing to provide them with "active treatment" of an ongoing nature, and not properly instructing its staff. Great Oaks is required to revise its procedures within 45 days or inspectors will recommend to the Maryland State Medicaid Agency that cutoff action be initiated. Medicaid reimbursements for moderate-income clients account for about half of Great Oaks' operating budget.

Many of the citations are based on federal standards that were revised late last year, state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene officials said.

Surveyors from the Maryland licensing division found that clients at Great Oaks "in general experience a high number of incidents" that result in injury to themselves and other residents, despite the presence of staff members.

Some residents did not have orthopedic equipment and other materials they were supposed to have; were "not consistently provided with privacy during their personal care" and were not consistently addressed with respect, the surveyors said in their report.

Staff members were not paying enough attention to some residents, ignoring them during brief periods or not focusing on them as they helped them dress or eat, the report said, citing instances in May seen by the state surveyors. The clients were cited by number.

Yesterday, state health officials said they expect Great Oaks' problems to be solved quickly, through additional staff training, revised record-keeping and changes in activities programmed for the center's residents.

"We will go through the standards and answer every single item," said Great Oaks Director Marvin M. Malcott. Malcott was assigned to the Silver Spring facility in 1986 to make corrections in its operations.

One of seven facilities for retarded adults and children run by the state, Great Oaks has faced Medicaid

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decertification three other times since 1985 for inadequate staffing and lack of attention to patients, programming and housekeeping. It has not lost federal money.

"Great Oaks has definitely improved itself" since 1985, said Harold Flanagan, father of a 34-year-old resident of the institution and an active member of the Great Oaks Association of residents' relatives. He said the addition of 50 temporary "direct care" aides had helped considerably. But Malcotti said only 25 of those attendants were being retained in the fiscal year that started July 1.

Great Oaks has 650 workers, half of whom provide immediate care to the residents, helping them eat, dress, bathe, study and move about the facility. Over the years, the employees union has complained that the workers are not given credit for working in high-stress jobs with starting salaries of about \$ 15,000 a year.

In recent years, some of Great Oaks' less severely retarded clients have moved to group homes and other community-based facilities, which has helped improve the ratio of staff members to residents.

The latest notice of deficiencies for Great Oaks Center comes at a time when Virginia officials have found another Washington area facility for the retarded, the Northern Virginia Training Center, to be out of compliance, for many similar reasons. The director of the Virginia facility said this week that it has been reinspected and informally told that funds would not be cut off.

Two other Maryland homes for the retarded, the Rosewood Center in Baltimore County and the Victor Cullen Center in Frederick County, were threatened with Medicaid decertification earlier this year, but have since satisfied the federal requirements.

Rosewood's superintendent and some of his staff are to arrive at Great Oaks Monday as part of a special group to help revise procedures there.

Among other things, the new federal standards call for more intense staff interaction with developmentally disabled residents of Medicaid-financed facilities and more thorough documentation that staff and clients are trying to meet behavior goals set for the residents.

"The old standards were paper-oriented, and you could have a decent operation on paper," said Malcotti, who said he did not dispute the findings at his institution. ". . . The new standards are ones a lot of us participated in developing. It's not like the feds cooked this stuff up."

**GRAPHIC: MAP, GREAT OAKS CENTER. LARRY FOGEL**