

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

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The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was established on July 1, 1969, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 77, Acts of 1969. The mission of the Department is to assure the people of Maryland their inherent right to a healthful environment and a high level of physical, mental, and social health. Achievement of this goal will be through the development of a comprehensive, continuous, and accessible system of health services for the State of Maryland, which emphasizes the promotion of health and the prevention of disease and disability.

Many programs are by their nature public functions and could not be performed effectively by the private sector. Prime among these is the responsibility for dealing with the epidemiological dimensions of hazards to health affecting the community, such as environmental pollution and communicable disease, and the organization of community efforts to prevent or control their impact.

The Department provides or purchases direct care services primarily in the following areas: residential and outpatient care for the mentally ill, the mentally retarded, the chronically ill, including those with tuberculosis, the impaired elderly, persons with addictive conditions, and court-referred youths. It also provides several preventive medicine services directly. It further develops programs for the rehabilitation of troubled youth. The Department also provides a comprehensive program of health care services for the indigent and medically indigent.

The Department is organized on the basis of program similarities under four Assistant Secretaries to provide effective service delivery. Under the Assistant Secretary for Medical Care Programs there are three administrations—Policy, Operations, and Compliance—charged with the reimbursement of health care services for the indigent and medically indigent. The Assistant Secretary for Special Programs is responsible for the Juvenile Services and Mental Retardation Administrations. The Alcoholism Control, Drug Abuse, and Mental Hygiene Administrations are assigned to the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Addictions. The Assistant Secretary for Health is responsible for the Environmental Health, Laboratories, Preventive Medicine, Aged and Chronically Ill, and Local Health Administrations. In addition, the twenty-four local health departments report directly to the Assistant Secretary for Health, but have access to all Departmental officials as well. The local health departments are the focal point in the delivery of services.

All Department-wide services of a regulatory nature, such as Health Planning and Development, Hearings and Regulations, Licensing and Certification, Health Services Cost Review, Community Relations, and Title VI (non-discriminatory practices) are coordinated by the Director of Regulatory Services. Various professional support services, available to all levels of organization, are administered by the Director of Professional Resource Services. Regulatory Services and Professional Resource Services are staff organizations of the Office of the Secretary. Other designated staff organizations include Legal Services, Government Relations, Special Services, Management Staff, and the Office of Service Operations (Administration).