

patients who have been or shall remain in such hospital for a period in excess of thirty (30) months under any one admission, the rate chargeable to the family of the patient shall thereafter not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the per capita cost. In arriving at the amount to be paid, the [collection] INVESTIGATION unit shall have due regard for the financial means or abilities of the patient, or the person or persons legally responsible for the patient's maintenance and support, and whenever deemed necessary, may agree to accept a periodic sum for the patient's maintenance less than the per capita cost. Upon failure of a patient or other legally responsible person to make payment or enter into an agreement to make payment, the [collection] INVESTIGATION unit shall notify the Attorney General and he shall institute proceedings on behalf of the unit for collection thereof with authority to make adjustment or settlements of said claims as he feels to be in the best interest of the State] REFER THE CASE TO THE CENTRAL COLLECTION UNIT CREATED WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FISCAL PLANNING.

(c-1) It is the intent of this subtitle that a husband may be liable for the support of a wife while she is an inmate of any such hospital; a wife, for a husband; a father or mother, or both, for a son or daughter under twenty-one (21) years of age; and a son or daughter, or both, for a father or mother. However, no liability under this subtitle shall be placed upon any son or daughter for the support of a father or mother by whom the son or daughter was abandoned; and no liability under this subtitle shall be placed upon any husband or wife for the support of a spouse by whom the husband or wife has been abandoned. The State Board of Health and Mental Hygiene shall promulgate rules and regulations pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act in Article 41 of this Code, providing for a determination of what shall constitute abandonment in any of these exceptions to the liability for support. This determination as to what constitutes abandonment is subject to judicial review under the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act in Article 41 of this Code. The provisions of § 97 of Article 27 of this Code have no effect on any determination of liability under this section.

(d) [A] EXCEPT WITH RESPECT TO ACCOUNTS REFERRED TO THE CENTRAL COLLECTION UNIT, ALL payments required to be made under the provisions of this section shall be made to and collected by the [collection] INVESTIGATION unit, and shall be accounted for and paid by the [collection] unit into the general funds of the State treasury, according to the procedure in effect for such accounting.

(d-1) In making investigations concerning collections under this section and subtitle, the [collection] INVESTIGATION unit shall require reports or statements to be made to it by such relatives or other persons, upon summons as prepared from time to time by the [collection] unit. Upon the refusal, wilful neglect or failure of any such relative or other person to file the required report or statement, the [collection] INVESTIGATION unit is authorized to apply to the circuit court of the county in which the relative or person is a resident, or to the Superior Court of Baltimore City, if the relative or person is a resident of the city, for an order of court requiring the relative or person to file the report or statement as specified by the [collection] unit. A refusal, wilful neglect or failure of the relative or person to observe the order of the court is punishable as contempt of court.

(e) Upon the death of any person admitted to any chronic hospital, the [collection] INVESTIGATION unit shall be entitled to make claim against the estate of any such person for his or her care while in such hospital, or for the balance due therefor if part has been paid. A claim under this subsection shall not include any charge for such care for a period longer than three years immediately preceding the death of such patient; except that if any relative liable for such