

## Preamble

WHEREAS, The Developmental Disabilities Administration Eligibility and Access Unit reports that over 7,000 individuals have applied for one or more services funded through the Developmental Disabilities Administration; and

WHEREAS, Although funding has been made available for a limited number of individuals in crisis or emergency situations and progress has been made in providing funds to transition youth in a timely manner, funding to provide services to individuals remaining on the waiting list in a planned systematic way has not occurred; and

WHEREAS, Maryland has a well established foundation for community based services through utilization of federal funds under the Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver on which long term health care reform rests; and

WHEREAS, National waiting list studies report that unless appropriate timely supports are made available, individuals on waiting lists for developmental disabilities services face greater risk of more costly crisis or emergency intervention in order to receive services or to relieve aging parents of daily care responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, In Maryland, 56.8% of adults waiting for services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration are living with parents or relatives; and

WHEREAS, 37% of these caregivers are over the age of 60, 12% are over the age of 70, and 1% are over the age of 80; and

WHEREAS, Maryland has undertaken positive steps to reduce the population served in State residential centers through systematic, deliberative planning to develop quality community supports and services needed for individuals with developmental disabilities to leave institutions and enjoy community life; and

WHEREAS, There is virtually no funding available for individuals with a developmental disability who live with their families awaiting services on the waiting list; and

WHEREAS, Sufficient savings are realized from serving individuals in a community setting rather than in a State residential center to fund additional persons currently on the waiting list in the community setting; ~~now, therefore, and~~

WHEREAS, The Mental Hygiene Administration estimates that there are hundreds of individuals presently confined to institutions only because more appropriate community-based services are not available to them; and

WHEREAS, The Mental Hygiene Administration's 5-year plan estimates that at least \$52 million is needed just to meet the community service needs of those citizens with mental illnesses identified, but not yet served; and

WHEREAS, Existing institutional dollars currently represent a critical source of funds necessary to finance essential services for citizens with serious mental illnesses who are unserved or underserved, including those targeted in the State comprehensive mental health planning law enacted by the General Assembly in 1991; and