

(3) "COMMUNITY DIRECT SERVICE WORKER" MEANS AN EMPLOYEE OF A COMMUNITY PROVIDER THAT PROVIDES TREATMENT OR SERVICES TO DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED INDIVIDUALS.

(4) "DISPARITY AMOUNT" MEANS THE MONETARY CALCULATION OF THE AVERAGE DIFFERENCE IN WAGES AND BENEFITS BETWEEN COMMUNITY DIRECT SERVICE WORKERS AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ASSOCIATES OR OTHER COMPARABLE EMPLOYEES IN STATE RESIDENTIAL CENTERS.

(5) "RATE" MEANS THE REIMBURSEMENT RATE PAID BY THE DEPARTMENT TO A COMMUNITY PROVIDER FROM THE STATE GENERAL FUND, MARYLAND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDS, OTHER STATE OR FEDERAL FUNDS, OR A COMBINATION OF FUNDS.

(B) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF THIS TITLE, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REIMBURSE COMMUNITY PROVIDERS AS PROVIDED IN THIS SECTION.

(C) (1) ON OR BEFORE ~~JULY~~ SEPTEMBER 1, 2001, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DETERMINE:

(I) THE DISPARITY AMOUNT; AND

(II) THE AMOUNT OF ANNUAL INCREASE IN THE RATE OF REIMBURSEMENT TO COMMUNITY PROVIDERS NECESSARY TO REDUCE AND ELIMINATE THE DISPARITY AMOUNT AS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DETERMINE THE DISPARITY AMOUNT USING DATA AND INFORMATION FROM:

(I) THE COMMUNITY SERVICES RATE REIMBURSEMENT COMMISSION; AND

(II) REPORTS REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BY THE DEPARTMENT.

(D) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL INCREASE THE RATE OF REIMBURSEMENT FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES PROVIDERS BY AN AMOUNT THAT:

(1) REDUCES THE DISPARITY AMOUNT TO ~~40%~~ 80% ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2002;

(2) REDUCES THE DISPARITY AMOUNT TO ~~20%~~ 60% ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2003; ~~AND~~

(3) REDUCES THE DISPARITY AMOUNT TO 40% ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2004;

(4) REDUCES THE DISPARITY AMOUNT TO 20% ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2005; AND

(5) ELIMINATES THE DISPARITY AMOUNT ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2004 2006.