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Shattering Myths *about* **The Cost of Services**

Q: Should people move to the community only if the State can save money?

A: No.

- Moving people to the community is not an issue of cost; it is an issue of human and civil rights.
- In fulfillment of human rights and in securing optimum opportunities for development, all people, regardless of the severity of their disability, are entitled to community living.ⁱ

Q: Is there a cost savings when an institution closes?

A: Yes.

- The proceeds from the sale of institutions go into Maryland's Community Services Trust Fund. Investment earnings generated by the Fund are used to support more people with developmental disabilities and their families in critical need of community services. In addition, closure of an institution means that the state can stop spending scarce public funds on costly maintenance and upkeep of antiquated buildings.

Q: Are institutions cost-effective?

A: No.

- Recent cost comparisons of community and institutional services refute claims that institutions offer "economies of scale" or that the centralization of services at institutions is more cost-effective.ⁱⁱ
- The cost of community services depends on each individual's needs and may or may not cost less.

Q: Why not operate an institutional system and a community system?

A: This is not fiscally or socially responsible.

- More than 11,000 people are on DDA's waiting list for community services. Policymakers must take their needs into account. Limited public resources must be spent in a fiscally and socially responsible manner.

It is NOT reasonable to segregate people in institutions when experience and research prove that even people with significant disabilities and intensive needs can be supported in the community.

It is NOT reasonable to continue to invest scarce public dollars operating large, inefficient congregate settings.

It is NOT reasonable to deny even one person the right to live among us in the community, where services and supports can be provided.

ⁱ *The Community Imperative: A refutation of all arguments in support of institutionalizing anybody because of mental retardation* (1979). Center on Human Policy at Syracuse University.

Established that all human beings, regardless of nature and severity of disability, are inherently valuable, have fundamental rights, and are capable of learning, growth, and development.

ⁱⁱ Taylor, S.J. (2003, June) *The Editor's Perspective on Institutional and Community Costs*. *Mental Retardation*, 41,125-126

MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

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