



## Strengthen Community Services in the Community

### ***Budget Fact Sheet #1 First of a 3-part series***

**More than 32,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are served through the Department of Mental Retardation.** The majority are served through private (primarily non-profit) providers. The state’s investment is partially subsidized (44%) by the federal government and other offsets. But these individuals are treated in an unequal fashion and rates for programs vary for individuals with similar needs.

Like other services funded through “purchase of service” contracts these providers have NOT received cost of living or adequacy funds since 1987. Furthermore, the salary reserve allocations make no allowance for increases in health benefit premiums. As compensation for staff continues to fall behind state workers and other private sector workers, the pool for this field becomes smaller. In addition, the Governor’s 2009 budget require cuts in the community residential account and other services at DMR (total of \$4 Million). This is on top of cuts in FY’08 in community residential, employment day and family support. Please don’t let this happen and address the quality of services in FY’09. Current service levels must be maintained.

We acknowledge the fiscal constraints you face, but we can’t ignore vulnerable constituents.

Please restore the \$4 Million in Turning 22 and Residential cuts in House 2 and maintain our community system with these funds. See more on these programs at [arcmass.org/StateHouse/Budget](http://arcmass.org/StateHouse/Budget)

Line Item	Services	House 2	Unmet Needs	Total
5920-2006	<b>Residential Rate</b> Not completely funded	\$2,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$12,000,000
4000-0117	<b>Salary Reserve</b> Across EOHHS	\$23, 000,000		\$23,000,000
5920-5000	<b>Turning 22</b> Services needed for 610, community work and living	\$6,100,000*	\$4,500,000	\$10,6000.000
		*House 2 includes \$1.6 Million cut, request allows \$3 Mil. for employment; \$21.6 M annualization		

### **Residential Rate Initiative**

Residential Rate Initiative is a new rate system that was developed by DMR and approved by the Romney Administration to address under funded residential services and to replace the current method of contracting for community residential services. The legislature approved \$2 million of a

3 year, \$30 Million request. Current contracts do not accurately reflect today's cost of service provision. The proposed system is intended to provide an objective, transparent and more equitable and realistic methodology, which is expected to result in increased quality and continuity of care.

## **Salary Reserve**

Community-based direct care providers of people with ID & DD earn an average salary under \$ 12.00 per hour. Can you imagine trying to live on \$ 22,000 a year? The basic necessities of life including gas, rent, groceries, & utilities exceed that total. The low salaries paid by community agencies contribute to high turnover and uneven quality in service delivery. The ability to thrive in the community with a good quality of life depends heavily on the skills and the willingness of the work force that supports our individuals with disabilities and families.

## **Turning 22**

The primary source of services for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities including autism spectrum disorder are local school systems. When children turn 22 they enter the adult service system where there are no entitlements. The transition to adult services is critical time. But the experience is a jarring one for students and families when they learn that there is limited or no funding for employment services. Ideally this is the time when the knowledge and skills acquired in school are applied to the world of work in the hope of creating a meaningful life. These services include job training, important day services and transportation.

Turning 22 dollars, although increasing over the years have not kept pace with the number of eligible individuals turning 22 annually. The increasing numbers of children with autism spectrum disorder and those who have survived with complex medical needs are probably the main reasons for the increase. Almost 200 students out of an estimated 610 graduating, will require residential services which leaves little for the majority who continue to live with family members and need employment or family support.

Our request allows at least \$3 Million to be applied to employment services which means at least 175 students will have a chance at a job. If T-22 is not increased many of these young people will have nowhere to go and they run the risk of losing many of the skills acquired in all of their earlier learning. Parents may need to quit their jobs to stay home with these young people resulting in not only lost wages for the family but also a reduction in tax revenue.

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