

Dear Members of Health and Government Operations Committee,

I am here today to speak to you on behalf of my clients at Cumberland Covenant House Adult Medical Day Care. I am the Administrative Director.

My clients apply for the Aged, Blind and Disabled waiver through the Allegany County Department of Social Services. These clients typically receive Social Security benefits in the amounts of \$753 to \$1100 per month. These clients usually have Medicare and have a Personal Needs Allowance of \$350 per month for expenses other than medical expenses. This allowance has not changed in at least 30 years. The healthcare expansion including the Maryland Health Connection did not affect this program or its allowance.

The result of this policy is that clients lose community-based services exactly 6 months after qualifying through what is known as a "Spend Down". Every client receiving more than \$753 per month in Social Security benefits must go through this process. What happens to these clients during the spend down process often results in higher costs for the industry than what continuing their benefits throughout the year would cost. Our clients often have ambulance rides, Emergency Department visits, Hospital and even Nursing Home admissions which defer costs to other departments. Ultimately, these clients qualify again due to quickly accumulating new medical bills which they cannot afford to pay. Every agency involved with this client must then go through a process of reenrollment which would not have been necessary without this interruption. Agencies affected by this process include: The Maryland Department of Health-Medicaid Division, Departments of Social Services, Adult Medical Day Care, Home Health Care agencies and medical supply companies.

I hope that the committee will consider House Bill 1091 to relieve some of our community's most vulnerable citizens of the burden of losing the services for which they have been deemed medically qualified.

Thank you for your time.

Jessica Peer
Administrative Director
Cumberland Covenant House Adult Medical Day Care
301-722-6681
5covenant@atlanticbbn.net

