

TO: The DMR Community

FROM: Elin Howe, Commissioner

DATE: October 16, 2008

RE: DMR Update 159

FY 2009 Fiscal Challenges Facing DMR

Yesterday, Governor Patrick presented the Fiscal Action Plan that the Commonwealth will implement to address the estimated deficit of \$1.4 billion in the FY 2009 state budget due to the economic downturn. The Plan calls for spending cuts and cost saving initiatives. For the Department of Mental Retardation (Department of Developmental Services as of July 1, 2009), our \$1.2 billion budget is reduced by a total of \$7.336 million, with \$1.9 million cut from the administration and operations account, \$3 million cut from the state facilities account, \$1.8 million cut from the autism account and the balance from reductions in earmarks in the community residential services, community day and work programs and family support services. However, thanks to Governor Patrick, Secretary Bigby and her staff, we are able at this time to preserve our essential and core community based services.

Over the next few weeks, we will be finalizing our plan for managing these funding cuts. The bullets below describe in more detail the impact of the \$7.336 million reduction on our Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

- We are considering many options for meeting the \$1.9 million cut to the administration and operations account and the \$3 million cut to state facilities account so as to minimize the need for staffing reduction. Amongst those options are the continuation of hiring controls, cancellation of conferences, reductions in contracts and interagency service agreements and the elimination of out of state travel.
- The \$1.8 million cut in the autism account consists of reducing the autism program capacity from 160 to 100 children (the autism

program served 80 children last year) and cuts in earmarks to the Asperger's Association of New England in the amount of \$50,000, Melmark New England in the amount of \$100,000, New England Center for Children in the amount of \$100,000, Whole Children, Inc., in the amount of \$15,000 and Youth Enhanced Services in the amount of \$37,500.

- The \$375,000 cut in the community residential supports account consists of cuts in earmarks to Best Buddies in the amount of \$250,000, GROW Associates in the amount of \$50,000, Mass Citizens Advocacy in the amount of \$25,000 and Special Olympics in the amount of \$50,000.
- The \$150,000 cut in the community day and work program account consists of cuts in earmarks to Life Focus Center in the amount of \$50,000 and Work, Inc. in the amount of \$100,000.
- The \$50,000 cut in the family supports account consists of cuts in earmarks to Advocacy Resource Center in the amount of \$25,000 and Friendship Home Project in the amount of \$25,000.
- Also, we have just learned that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has cut the funding for the DESE/DMR program (formerly known as the DOE/DMR program) from \$10 million to \$6.5 million. We will be consulting with the Statewide Family Support Council on how best to manage this proposed reduction.

These are difficult and challenging times. Thank you for your understanding and continued commitment in supporting the more than 33,000 individuals and their families served by the Department. I will continue to update you on our plans to implement the budget reductions.