



BUTLER COUNTY BOARD OF
MENTAL
RETARDATION
&
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES



Central Administration
1910 Fairgrove Avenue
Suite E
Hamilton, Ohio 45011

Visit our website at
www.butlermrdd.org

513-867-5962

513-867-5078 FAX
513-867-5073 TTY

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URGENT – IMPORTANT INFORMATION THAT WILL AFFECT PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVED BY MRDD

January, 2009

Dear Families, Community Friends, Providers and Staff Members,

Happy New Year and Welcome to 2009!

This is the time of year when we normally reach out to all of you and tell you about our successes in 2008 and our plans for 2009. That particular letter and information will be coming soon. For now, we want to inform you about how the current financial crisis in the nation and state is affecting our county and particularly how it is affecting this agency.

Most of you have heard that Governor Strickland has made a couple of cuts to the state budget in 2008 and most recently in December, he asked for another 5.75% to be cut from the state budget by all departments. Up until then, the state department of MRDD had minimized the direct cuts to the subsidies it gives County Board's of MRDD. However, this latest cut impacted our subsidy by \$1,121,224 annually.

In addition, the Governor directed all state departments to submit their next biennium budget reflecting an additional 10% reduction over these already reduced 2008 levels. We are estimating this cut to impact our subsidy by an additional \$650,000 annually. Then, (it gets worse), at a news conference in mid December the Governor released additional information stating that without a marked increase in holiday shopping sales and without a requested Federal bailout to states, Ohio would have to reduce spending by an additional 25% on the already submitted budgets. Locally we are estimating that would mean an additional \$1,028,000 in revenue cuts to our Board. This would bring the total state cuts to \$2,800,000 in less than two years.

In 2008, the State provided 8.86% of our revenues (about \$2.8 million) via subsidy, family resource money and capital assistance. The remainder of our revenues (about 68%) comes from local property tax collections and from Federal Medicaid for reimbursable services (about 14 %.) We know that the local property tax collection is at risk of going down; we are not sure how stable the current or future Medicaid reimbursable services will be.

In December, we met with the County Commissioners and discussed our long term financial projections. Our last levy request (a replacement of 1 mill) was in 2004. Since we have 3 mills that continue, theoretically, we do not have to go on the ballot unless we want to replace our current mills with current property value millage or if we need to increase the mills we want to receive. Since neither of these are viable options for us given the current economy, we are trying to work within our current millage until 2012. This means that there will be no growth in our revenues or expenditures. In fact, we will be working off of a decreasing budget for the next four years. This makes our



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need for State and Federal revenue even more crucial, yet it appears that those revenues are likely to decline as well.

As of today we have a workable budget for 2009, however, we need to consider what we will do if the state decreases our subsidy by another \$1.5 - 2.0 million in the next year or two. In the past couple years and in the future we will continue to make adjustments to our expenditures that have the lowest impact on direct services. By doing this, we have been able to keep up with the increasing demands, particularly for Early Intervention, specialized services, and residential support.

The big concern is, of course, will we be able to maintain our current levels of service and/or will we be able to keep up with the increasing needs of individuals who are eligible for our services? The chances are likely that although we can and will make numerous adjustments to our expenditures, we may experience deeper cuts than we can adjust to without significantly affecting current services.

No one, of course, knows how long and hard this economic crisis will be. We have been working with staff to review and prioritize our programs and services and to come up with several contingency plans for future revenue cuts. We need you to understand the difficulty of this task and to help. At this time, here is what we are asking from you:

- Help us advocate with the state officials to protect our funding:
 - Give input to Director Martin of the Ohio Department of MRDD.*
 - Consider becoming involved with Call 2 Action. * This is a state-wide group organized by the Ohio County Boards Association. There will be a meeting to help train and organize people who want to be involved.
 - Contact your State Representatives and/or the Governor's office.*
- Help your support coordinators and team members keep your services at or below your individual budget allocation/funding range.
- Help us create a new Strategic Plan which will guide our decisions in the next few years. There will be opportunities to meet in small groups in the next several months as well as a two day session in May.
- Become involved with the Friends of Citizens with Disabilities,* the political action group, as it raises money for our next levy campaign in 2012. We will more than likely have to ask for additional millage and will need resources in order to present an aggressive campaign.
- Help each other out. Join the ARC of Butler County*, the Quality Co-op*, Empowered People Reaching Out, attend meetings with other family groups*. You will need each other for emotional support and will inevitably come up with your own real ways to support each other.



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- Be open and patient with the Board and the staff as we make changes due to cuts in our budget. Help us with ideas and with the implementation of changes to keep within our budget.

*See back of letter for contact information

Finally, remember that none of us likes this situation. The Butler County Board of MRDD and this community have enjoyed a history of growing excellent programs and services that meet the needs of individuals in our county. We can tell you that there are many counties in Ohio that cannot say that. Yet, we also know that many families in our community are struggling to meet their basic needs.

We are committed to provide the best we can with the resources the community can bear to give us. We appreciate that the community has been generous with their support.

We will continue to keep you informed as we go through the year. We will be setting up "Budget Updates" on our website so that you can check for current information.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Christina Hurr
Superintendent
and the Board of MRDD

Imogene O'Lenick
Board President

Rev. Dr. Kim Katterheinrich
Vice President

Kathy McMahon-Klosterman
Recording Secretary

Linda Good
Board Member

Utawna Leap
Board Member

Craig Moon
Board Member

Anthony Yocco
Board Member

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*SEE REVERSE FOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Information

To see the budget presentation by Director Martin and to give input, go to the Ohio Department of MRDD web site at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/> and under the heading Learn More About click on “Virtual Budget Forum”

Call 2 Action Meeting (statewide advocacy group)

February 7 at Warren County Board of MRDD (513-695-1652)

10 a.m. to noon

Call Linda Oda at 514-531-0616 to RSVP or to find out about more sessions

The ARC Butler County

Call Jack Pealer at 513-867-5924 for more information about meetings

Quality Co-op and Empowered People Reaching Out (EPRO)

Call Keith Banner at 513-867-5932 for more information about meetings

Friends of Citizens with Disabilities

Call Wendy Planicka at 513-867-5962, ext. 21 for more information

Transition Meetings

Call Sarah Rihm at 513-867-5625 for more information

Liberty Center Advocates Meetings

Call the center at 513-867-5977 for more information

Middletown Center and Middletown Enrichment Center Parent Group Meetings

Call the center at 513-425-8728 for more information

Your State Representatives:

Tim Derickson (53rd District)

614-644-5094 or district53@ohr.state.oh.us

Courtney Combs (54th District)

614-644-6721 or district54@ohr.state.oh.us

William Coley (55th District)

614-466-8550 or district55@ohr.state.oh.us

Your Senator and Governor:

Senator Gary Cates (4th District)

614-466-8072 or

SD04@senate.state.oh.us

Governor Ted Strickland

614-466-3555

<http://www.governor.ohio.gov/>

Click on “Contact the Governor”

Be sure to check the Butler County Board of MRDD web site: www.butlermrdd.org for information on events, programs and services and to read more about the issues in this letter, click on “Budget Updates”.