SCOPE:

County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Administrators
Community Residential Mental Retardation Facility Directors
Base Service Unit Directors

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Bulletin is to describe allowable support costs to enable persons with mental retardation to live independently in the community.

BACKGROUND:

Support for people who live independently was first described in the Program and Budget Guidelines for Special Living Arrangements for Mentally Retarded Persons which was published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on February 17, 1973 at 3 Pa. B. 338. Over the years, this support has been funded as a new service within the community residential program with 100% state funds. Since the Program and Budget Guidelines for Special Living Arrangements for Mentally Retarded Persons were rescinded on December 1, 1984 at 14 Pa. B. 4373, this bulletin is intended to describe the Department's definition of allowable costs to support individuals living independently in the community.

POLICY:

SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

§6000.141. Criteria for provision of support services.

(a) Support is provided in a residential setting in which there is ten hours or less direct staff contact per week per facility, and all residents sign their own lease without agency co-signature or own their own home.
(b) Support services are for those persons who can live independently and who can generally be expected to pay their own room and board costs.

$6000.142. Payment for support services.

(a) Payment for supports for people who live independently is made through the community mental retardation residential or non-residential allocation and does not require a County match. Support services include but are not limited to the following:

1. reimbursement for up to an average of ten hours a week of staff salaries
2. minor physical adaptations of the resident's home to accommodate a handicapped condition
3. supplementation of room and board costs

(b) Individuals receiving support to live independently are eligible for Federal funding participation through the Department's approved 2176 Waiver Program based on the individual's meeting all applicable waiver eligibility requirements.

$6000.143. Documentation.

In cases where room and board costs are supplemented, there should be documentation on file that the person has applied for and exhausted benefit payments under fuel assistance, food stamps and any other public benefit program that is available for payment of room and board costs.

$6000.144. Locations.

Support for people to live independently in the community can be provided in settings that were previously licensed as a community residential facility. Residents of prior licensed settings do not have to move from a community residential facility when they need an average of ten hours or less of direct staff contact a week, although they are free to do so.

$6000.145. Reporting procedure.

Persons receiving supports to live independently should be reported on the community residential services information system through use of the mental retardation community residential data input form MR 5.

$6000.146. Verification.

The person's ability and willingness to live independently with supports should be verified by the County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program based on a recommendation of the person's interdisciplinary team and assessment of the person's need for staff support and supervision not to exceed an average of 10 hours per week.