Scope: Regional MR Commissioners
County MH/MR Administrators
Base-Service Unit-Directors
DPW Program and Administration Deputies

Purpose: The purpose of this bulletin is twofold:
(1) To state the policy of the Department about
   the provision of support services to persons
   with mental retardation and their families
   and
(2) To announce Departmental actions to increase County
   programs for the provision of support services to
   persons with mental retardation and their families.

Background:

The Office of Mental Retardation of the Department of Public
Welfare has long recognized that many families of persons with mental
retardation must have access to certain types of support services to
maintain the disabled family member at home. Likewise many adults with
mental retardation successfully living independently in the community
frequently require access to some types of support services. These family
and client services include, but are not limited to: respite care;
sitter/companionship services; homemaker services; in-home support;
socialization/recreation; parent/family training; speech therapy; aural
rehabilitation; hearing aid evaluations; dactylographic therapy; physical
therapy; occupational therapy; mobility training; behavioral programming;
and transportation. With the assistance of these types of services, many
persons with mental retardation have been able to live successfully with
their families or independently in the community.
To provide support services to persons with mental retardation and their families at the County level, the Office of Mental Retardation initiated the Family Resource Services (FRS) Program in Fiscal Year 1972-73. Over the past ten years, thousands of persons with mental retardation and their families have received necessary support services under the auspices of the categorically-funded FRS Program.

During the past few years, however, a number of Counties have requested a greater degree of programmatic and funding flexibility in providing family and client support services than is available through the categorical FRS Program.

Policy:

It is the policy of the Office of Mental Retardation that persons with mental retardation and their families should have access to the types of support services necessary for the disabled member to be maintained at home with his/her family or in an independent living situation.

Target Population:

This policy applies to support services for the following persons:

1. Persons with mental retardation who live at home with their natural or adoptive families, foster families, relatives or legal guardians.

2. Persons with mental retardation who live independently in the community, that is, in (a) a residence which they own, rent or lease, (b) a domiciliary care setting, (c) a boarding home or (d) a minimal supervision CLA setting in which they directly pay for their own rental or leasing costs and their own food.

3. Natural or adoptive families, foster families, relatives or legal guardians who are maintaining a person with mental retardation at home.

Application:

1. To provide Counties with greater programmatic and funding flexibility in the provision of family and client support services, the Department, effective July 1, 1983, has placed funds for support services in the non-categorical MR base allocation of County Programs.
(2) For Fiscal Year 1983-84 and ensuing years, Counties should at a minimum maintain their current fiscal and programmatic effort in regard to providing support services to persons with mental retardation and their families by funding those services from their MR base allocation. It is expected that the provision of support services to persons with mental retardation will increase with the additional programmatic and funding flexibility given to Counties.

(3) For Fiscal Year 1983-84, Counties are to use the Form MH/MR 20 to report expenditures for family and client support services with the following modifications:

(A) In addition to the identifying information, complete Section 1 of the form down through "Total (Sum of 1.A thru H)", and also Section III "Unduplicated Number of Clients Served."

(B) Include the necessary information for Transportation Services in Section 1.E.

(C) List under Special Innovative Services any support service for which there is no category on the form.

(4) For Fiscal Year 1983-84, Counties are to report data pertaining to family and client support services on the CCR Form MR 256 Part 1 with the following modifications:

(A) Include information required in the Transportation category.

(B) Include in the Special Innovative Services category information on any support services for which there is no other space on the form.

(5) The Office of Mental Retardation will use the data submitted by County Programs on the MH/MR 20 and the CCR Form 256 Part 1 to monitor the extent to which counties are making support services available to persons with mental retardation and their families.