

Massachusetts Lags on MR/DD Funding

Contrary to media stereotypes, Massachusetts is not a generous state for human services or disability spending. It is fourth among all US states in per capita income, but only 18th in MR/DD spending relative to income. Connecticut, Maine, New York, and Rhode Island are all in the Top Ten, so it's not a matter of size, wealth, or region. And contrary to what some advocates imply about the developmental centers draining the budget, Massachusetts is 19th in spending on community placements relative to income, but down to 26th on spending for "institutional" settings. Overall, the Commonwealth ranks 22nd on residential placements per state population. Again, four of the five states on our borders offer more residential placements, and so does Maine. COFAR president David J. Hart says, "Look at these numbers, and you can see why advocate groups are fighting each other – This state just isn't coming up with enough residential placements at any level of care – and it's just starting to get interested in the supports that could help families keep their relative with MR/DD at home."

(Source: *The State of the States in Developmental Disabilities, 2005*. Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities, University of Colorado)