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**Executive Summary of the Third Party Billing Annual Report
2000-2001 School Year**

On July 1, 1998, President Ronald Reagan signed into law Public Law 100-360. This law contained an extensive overhaul of the Medicare program, but also included language that allowed for school districts to bill Medicaid for services provided to children who meet two criteria: The student must be in the special education program, and must also have Medicaid benefits.

In the spring of 1992, Baltimore County Public Schools began to implement a billing process to obtain reimbursement from Medicaid for services provided to special education students. Services provided by Speech/Language Pathologists, Audiologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Psychologists, Nurses, and school Social Workers became eligible for reimbursement.

In 1994, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Maryland State Department of Education implemented a process for the billing of case management services. Case Management services are considered as the coordination and monitoring of the delivery of IEP services, including the extensive preparation required for IEP Team meetings. In most cases in Baltimore County, the case manager is the Special Education Teacher, or the Speech/Language Pathologist.

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Maryland State Department of Education began implementing a program of billing for transportation services in 1996. This program was approved and billing began in fiscal year 1998. In order for BCPS to bill, a student must have an IEP, have Medicaid benefits, and have specialized transportation delineated in the IEP. In addition, the district must show that the student received a Medicaid covered service during the day for billing to occur.

The Office of Third Party Billing currently bills Medicaid for all services associated with each of these programs.

Highlights of the 2000-2001 school year

The reimbursement of revenue from Medicaid has increased from \$6,919,254.60 to \$8,037,182.05, from FY 2000 to FY 2001. This amounts to a 16.15% increase in the reimbursement to BCPS.

The Baltimore County Public Schools has increased the identification of Medicaid eligible students from 3,836 to 4,348, from FY 2000 to FY 2001, and increase of 13.3%. This increase can be attributed to a multitude of factors, but most importantly the efforts of Principals, IEP Chairs, Special Education staff, and Related Service providers to secure Medicaid information from parents.

The Office of Third Party Billing also completed a revision of the Third Party Billing brochure, a publication designed for parents and guardians to understand the program and how it operates.

School-based training sessions were also provided to case managers at the request of the Principal or the IEP Chair. Each of these sessions usually take between 30-45 minutes and allow the special education staff at the schools to gain specific knowledge of their role in the Third Party Billing process. For schools with high turnover in their special education staff, this component is critical to the success of the Third Party Billing program. During the 2000-2001 school year, 27 training sessions were held at schools for case managers.

The Office of Third Party Billing has an incentive program that is designed to encourage and reward the efforts of school based staff and administrators in implementing this program. On an annual basis, Certificates of Achievement are awarded to schools that submit 95% or more of their potential case management encounter data to the Office of Third Party Billing. For the 2000-2001 school year, 137 certificates were awarded to schools. Many of these certificates are on display in the lobbies of our schools.

Next Steps for the program

On July 1, 2001, the State of Maryland implemented a new program, the Autism waiver. The autism waiver is specifically designed to provide assistance and relief to families of children who are autistic. Through this program, the school district can receive hourly reimbursement for services such as intensive day habilitation, usually provided by a special education teacher and one on one aide. While the process of getting a student onto the waiver is cumbersome, it is anticipated that significant funds will be recovered by BCPS for these efforts. The Office of Third Party Billing, Department of Special Education, and the Department of Student Support Services are working collaboratively to ensure that this program is implemented properly.

In 1996, President William Clinton signed a bill into legislation concerning the privacy of records, now known as the Health Insurance Privacy and Portability Act (HIPPA). HIPPA requires that a standard billing system for Medicaid be implemented by all states by October 16, 2002. This will require that the Office of Third Party Billing make changes to our billing system to be in compliance with the State of Maryland. The Office of Third Party Billing and the Department of Information Technology will be planning the implementation of the HIPPA requirements.