

Martin O'Malley,
Governor

Anthony Brown
Lt. Governor

Brenda Donald
Secretary

August 28, 2009

Dear Foster Parent:


We are writing to alert you to a new process that will result in some changes to the monthly payments that you receive through MD CHESSIE for the foster care services you are providing. MD CHESSIE is our new electronic payment system that you have seen since January, 2009. These changes will be minor, and over the course of the year will not impact the total amount of money you are receiving to support the foster children placed in your care, although the monthly amounts you see will vary slightly. Please allow me a moment to explain.

The payment made to all foster parents for children placed in their homes is referred to as the "Board Rate". This rate is intended to reimburse you for the cost of taking care of a child. The Department of Human Resources establishes the Board Rate through its policies, and it is based on federal government estimates on the cost of raising a child in this region. Currently, the monthly Board Rate in Maryland is \$835 for children 11 and under and \$850 for children 12 and over. This payment has always been made as a monthly payment, unless a child was only in your home for less than a full month. In this case, the Board Rate was paid as a per diem (daily) rate of \$27.45 or \$27.94 per day depending on the age.

The change that will occur is that MD CHESSIE, beginning in October, 2009, will be making ALL payments as per diem payments rather than as monthly payments. This means that the per diem rate will be calculated based on the number of days in the month, rather than a flat monthly rate. Specifically, During January, March, May, July, August, October and December, you will receive payment for 31 days for children placed in your home for the entire month. During April, June, September, and November, you will receive payment for 30 days for children placed in your home the entire month, and the February payment will be for 28 or 29 days, depending on whether it is a leap year. If you total these payments for the entire year, you will see that the amount is the same, and it is only your monthly amount that will vary by approximately \$27 depending on the month.

I thank you for your continued service to Maryland's children, and we certainly hope that there is no inconvenience or confusion caused by this change. If there are any questions about this new payment method, feel free to call the MD CHESSIE payment hotline, at 1(877) DHR-2PAY.

Sincerely,



Carnitra White, MSW
Executive Director
Social Services Administration