

Maryland Legal Aid Bureau
Questions from June 17, 2014 Data Panel to Planning Council

1) What is the capacity of legal services for Ryan White to take on a number of new cases that could arise from the implementation of the ACA?

Maryland Legal Aid can increase its capacity to accommodate new cases that arise from the implementation of the ACA. In order to service additional ACA cases, however, Maryland Legal Aid will require increased funding to support additional attorneys and paralegals. Medicaid expansion has the potential to increase the number of Medical Assistance (MA) appeals in various ways: 1) the ACA has increased the number of people eligible for MA, so the number of people filing appeals and having MA problems will highly increase with the implementation of the expansion; 2) MA appeals are no longer limited to just eligibility and direct service issues—now there are new grounds for possible appeals, including the calculation of the tax credit, household composition, and service denials; and 3) it is very possible that appeals will arise related to the use of the Marketplace—for example, denials of service by marketplace providers and issues relating to the imposition of copayments and deductibles. Individuals who are utilizing the marketplace may be eligible for Legal Aid services, especially if Ryan White were to raise its eligibility threshold to 500% of FPL. Legal Aid is at capacity for the Ryan White clients that we currently serve. At our current funding level, Ryan White does not cover the number of Legal Aid staff we utilize to a) serve clients; and b) achieve grant compliance. Currently, it does not even cover one full time staff attorney. Our funding levels have been cut in successive grant cycles, which has reduced our capacity to provide Ryan White services.