

**§ 122C-143.1. Policy guidance.**

(a) The General Assembly shall, as it considers necessary, endorse as policy guidance long-range plans for the broad age/disability categories of persons to be served and the services to be provided by area authorities.

(b) The Secretary shall develop a payment policy that designates, within broad age/disability categories, the priority populations, based on their disability level and the types of service to be supported by State resources. The Secretary shall review the Department's payment policy annually to assure that payments are made consistent with the State's long-range plans.

(c) The Secretary shall ensure that the payment policy provides incentives designated to target resources consistent with legislative policy and with the State's long-range plans and to promote equal accessibility to services for individuals regardless of their catchment area.

(d) Upon request of the Secretary, each area authority shall develop, revise, or amend its local long-range plans to be consistent with the policy guidance set forth in the State's long-range plans. Local service implementation plans shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary.

(e) The Secretary shall ensure that the Department's requests for expansion funds for area authorities are consistent with the State's long-range plans and include consideration of needs identified by the area authorities and their local plans. (1993, c. 321, s. 220(e).)