



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor – Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor – S. Anthony McCann, Secretary

Developmental Disabilities Administration

Diane K. Coughlin, Director

EDUCATIONAL ALERT !!!

TO: All DDA Service Providers

FROM: Diane K. Coughlin, Director *DKC*
Developmental Disabilities Administration

Wendy A. Kronmiller, Acting Director
Office of Health Care Quality *WAK*

SUBJECT: Physical site hazards

DATE: December 7, 2005

During the past several months there have been several serious incidents and a death related to falls down basement steps. In these incidents the door leading to the basement area was left open causing unsafe conditions for individuals with visual disabilities and individuals who use wheelchairs. We would like to draw your attention to the following issues cited:

- Failure to protect the individual from neglect
- Failure to ensure staff training
- Failure to provide a home that is free from safety and health hazards.

All providers should assess the needs of the individuals they serve in relation to the physical sites in which they live. Based on individual needs e.g., physical and visual impairments, we are strongly recommending that all providers install self-closure devices on any door leading to a lower level. If the area leading to the lower level cannot be secured, self-closure devices may be helpful in preventing accidental access that could lead to serious injuries or death.

Working together we can reduce avoidable injury and death. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

