

(6) "NEUTRAL FACT-FINDING" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN TITLE 17 OF THE MARYLAND RULES.

(7) "NEUTRAL PROVIDER" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO CONDUCTS NEUTRAL CASE EVALUATION OR NEUTRAL FACT-FINDING.

(8) "SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN TITLE 17 OF THE MARYLAND RULES.

(B) (1) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY IF:

(I) ALL PARTIES FILE WITH THE COURT AN AGREEMENT NOT TO ENGAGE IN ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION; AND

(II) THE COURT FINDS THAT ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION UNDER THIS SECTION WOULD NOT BE PRODUCTIVE.

(2) IN DETERMINING WHETHER ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION WOULD NOT BE PRODUCTIVE UNDER PARAGRAPH (1)(II) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE COURT MAY CONSIDER WHETHER THE PARTIES HAVE ALREADY ENGAGED IN ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION.

(C) IN ADDITION TO THE QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE 17 OF THE MARYLAND RULES, THE COURT OF APPEALS MAY ADOPT RULES REQUIRING A MEDIATOR, NEUTRAL PROVIDER, OR INDIVIDUAL CONDUCTING A SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE TO HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH HEALTH CARE MALPRACTICE CLAIMS.

(D) WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE LATER OF THE FILING OF THE DEFENDANT'S ANSWER TO THE COMPLAINT OR THE DEFENDANT'S CERTIFICATE OF A QUALIFIED EXPERT UNDER § 3-2A-04 OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE COURT SHALL ORDER THE PARTIES TO ENGAGE IN ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE.

(E) (1) WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE LATER OF THE FILING OF THE DEFENDANT'S ANSWER TO THE COMPLAINT OR THE DEFENDANT'S CERTIFICATE OF A QUALIFIED EXPERT UNDER § 3-2A-04 OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE PARTIES MAY CHOOSE A MEDIATOR, NEUTRAL PROVIDER, OR INDIVIDUAL TO CONDUCT A SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE.

(2) IF THE PARTIES CHOOSE A MEDIATOR, NEUTRAL PROVIDER, OR INDIVIDUAL TO CONDUCT A SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE, THE PARTIES SHALL NOTIFY THE COURT OF THE NAME OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

(F) (1) IF THE PARTIES DO NOT NOTIFY THE COURT THAT THEY HAVE CHOSEN A MEDIATOR, NEUTRAL PROVIDER, OR INDIVIDUAL TO CONDUCT A SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE WITHIN THE TIME REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION, THE COURT SHALL ASSIGN A MEDIATOR, NEUTRAL PROVIDER, OR INDIVIDUAL TO CONDUCT A SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE TO THE CLAIM WITHIN 30 DAYS.

(2) (I) WITHIN 15 DAYS AFTER THE PARTIES ARE NOTIFIED OF THE IDENTITY OF THE MEDIATOR, NEUTRAL PROVIDER, OR INDIVIDUAL CONDUCTING A