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Field Operations Memo 2004-45
December 1, 2004

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: 2005 Social Security/SSI COLA for TAFDC, EAEDC and FS

Overview

The Social Security and SSI Cost-Of-Living Adjustments (COLA) have been scheduled. Effective January 2005, Social Security benefits and SSI payments will increase by 2.7 percent. The basic Medicare Part B premium will increase from \$66.60 to \$78.20 per month.

This Field Operations Memo identifies:

- general BEACON activities for processing the 2005 Social Security/SSI COLA; and
- AU Manager and Supervisor activities required to prepare for the 2005 Social Security/SSI COLA.

**BEACON
Actions**

As of close of business January 14, 2005 for grantees whose SSN ends in 0-5 and January 21, 2005 for grantees whose SSN ends in 6-9, BEACON will automatically begin recalculating Social Security/SSI COLA amounts for all active TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs with an active or ineligible Assessed Person (AP). The Social Security and SSI COLA Batch Program released to FMCS will automatically change February benefit amounts for these AUs.

**BEACON
Actions
(continued)**

Note: As of November 22, 2004, RSDI and SSI BEACON updates were suspended until the SDX and BENDEX COLAs are completed in January. Options E and H on the BA Screen will display a message that the screens are unavailable until December 21, 2004. However, anyone who applies for SSI or appeals his or her SSI decision will be added to SDX during this time period. The SVES overnight inquiry is available from November 22 through December 21 for RSDI and SSI income verifications until that time.

Active AUs:

BEACON will generate income change notices informing active TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs with an active or ineligible AP of changes in their February benefits. These notices can be viewed on the Document History tab or the Daily Priority Action View - Documents Sent For Past Week.

Note: Even though the new COLA amounts will be displayed on BEACON beginning the week of January 17, 2005, these amounts will not be used in benefit calculations to impact January benefits. They will impact February benefits.

Denied, Closed and Pending AUs:

All denied, pending and closed TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs will have their COLA amount updated on the Income Tab of the Other Income Status window. EBC requests, however, will not be automatically created and released for these AUs. If AU Managers take action on these AUs such as (re)opening an AU, they must review the information found on the Income Tab of the Income Status window to ensure that this information is correct and up to date.

**Additional
AU Manager
Actions**

New and Reopened AUs:

When establishing new or reopened AUs *in* January, 2005, use the new (current) Social Security and/or SSI COLA amounts.

Any AU with a discrepant Social Security or SSI amount (e.g., if the amount is unavailable from Social Security or the amount found on BEACON is greater than the new Social Security amount, etc.) will be identified on the "Clients With RSDI and/or SSI" View. Detailed information and instructions on Social Security/SSI discrepancies will be issued after the COLA is completed and should be received by TAOs in January 2005.

IMPORTANT: AU Managers must ensure that the SSI and RSDI income is labeled correctly on BEACON for accurate income calculations to occur.

**Supervisor
Actions**

Supervisors must authorize any pending transactions for grantees whose SSN ends in 0-5 before close of business on January 14, 2005 and for grantees whose SSN ends in 6-9 before close of business on January 21, 2005. This will ensure that recipients receive the correct notice regarding their benefit amount when COLA is run.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.
