



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Northeast Region

10 Causeway St.
Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

December 12, 2001

REGIONAL LETTER 02-06

Subject: Medical Expense Deduction

In response to questions received recently, this clarifies the medical expense deduction policy and the related provision in 7 CFR 273.10(d)(4) that was added to the Food Stamp Program Regulations on October 3, 1994. While for most allowable expenses it remains policy that the deduction is allowed only when the expense is due, the provision at 7 CFR 273.10(d)(4) does allow consideration of past due medical bills when the household's monthly medical deduction for the certification period is determined.

Specifically, the provision states:

At certification and recertification, the household shall report and verify all medical expenses. The household's monthly medical deduction for the certification period shall be based on the information reported and verified by the household, and any anticipated changes in the household's medical expenses that can be reasonably expected to occur during the certification period based on available information about the recipient's medical condition, public or private insurance coverage, and current verified medical expenses. The household shall not be required to file reports about its medical expenses during the certification period.

Therefore, medical expenses are an exception to the policy that allowable expenses can only be deducted when they are due. At certification, unpaid medical bills can be considered when determining a household's monthly medical deduction for the certification period. The household can voluntarily report medical expenses that come due during the certification period and have them considered in determining the monthly medical deduction for the remainder of the certification period, but it cannot be required to do so. In accordance with the above regulatory provision, the household may also report at recertification the medical expenses that occurred during its certification and have them considered in determining the monthly medical deduction for the new certification period.

Please contact Jane DiBiasio at (617) 565-6401 if you have any questions concerning this option.
Sincerely,

Mary A. Ferris, Chief
State Program Improvement Section
Food Stamp Program
Northeast Region