



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
600 Washington Street • Boston MA 02111

DEVAL L. PATRICK  
Governor

JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.  
Secretary

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
Lieutenant Governor

JULIA E. KEHOE  
Commissioner

**Field Operations Memo 2010-4**  
**January 15, 2010**

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff

**From:** John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

**Re:** Medex Premium Rate Changes and Medicare Changes

**Overview**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts has announced Medex premium rate changes for the following non-group plans: Bronze, Core, Core Plus, Gold, Silver, and Standard. These changes were effective on January 1, 2010.

This memo:

- identifies the non-group plans that have changed and the corresponding rate changes;
- provides information on updates to SNAP benefits and the Medex premium amounts; and
- gives information about the 2010 Medex Premium Rate Change Report.

**Note:** While there is no SSA COLA this year, the Medicare Part B Premium and Medicare Part D Deductible will also be adjusted with the Medex Premium Rate change.

**Medex Rate  
Changes**

<b>Plan</b>	<b>New Monthly Premium</b>
GOLD	\$ <b>709.27</b>
SILVER	\$ <b>511.15</b>
STANDARD	\$ <b>502.37</b>
BASIC	\$ <b>378.36</b>
CORE PLUS	\$ <b>158.32</b>
BRONZE	\$ <b>172.81</b>
CORE	\$ <b>91.22</b>

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**Medex Rate  
Changes**

The following two Medex plans have been added:

<b>Plan</b>	<b>Monthly Premium</b>
BASIC WITHOUT Rx	\$ <b>167.37</b>
CORE PLUS WITHOUT Rx	\$ <b>119.03</b>

These plans will be available for selection with BEACON Increment 2.1.27, scheduled for January 25, 2010.

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**Rate Changes  
on BEACON**

BEACON will be updated to impact February SNAP benefits with the new Medex premium amounts for participating households as follows:

- the new SNAP benefit amounts will be displayed on the Results tab for non-pended transactions and on Interview Wrap-up with a status of Pending Release for pended transactions;
- the new Medex premium amount will be displayed on the Health Insurance window, Policy tab.

Updated households affected by Medex will receive a BEACON-generated notice informing them of a change to their February SNAP benefits.

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**2010 Medex  
Premium  
Rate Change  
Report**

MIS will email an electronic copy of the 2010 Medex Premium Rate Change Report to TAOs during the week of January 18, 2010.

The report will identify all cases updated in BEACON and will include the following data elements:

- TAO Name;
- Case Manager;
- Case Name;
- Case SSN;
- Medex Type;
- Premium;
- Old Benefit Amount; and
- New Benefit Amount.

The report is for informational purposes. No case manager action is required.

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**Identifying  
Clients Enrolled  
in Medex**

When processing applications and recertifications, case managers are reminded of the importance of identifying clients enrolled in Medex. Proper coding ensures that the household receives the correct benefit amount and that the Medex amount will be properly updated automatically each year. To ensure accuracy and the correct calculation of SNAP benefits, Medex premium payments must be entered on the Health Insurance window, Policy tab, Insurer: Blue Cross. The case manager must make sure to select the correct Benefit Type from the dropdown list on the Benefits tab.

Please refer to *A User's Guide: Transitional Assistance Programs and BEACON*, Chapter XIV- J for procedures to update any incorrect information.

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## Medicare Part D Changes

Medicare Part D has three levels of participation:

- Standard;
- Partial Extra Help; and
- Full Extra Help

The overwhelming majority of SNAP- eligible participants qualify for either Full Extra Help or Partial Extra Help due to low income and assets. Therefore, some SNAP- eligible participants will continue to pay no premium or deductible, while others will pay a low premium and a low deductible.

As of January 1, 2010, the Standard Deductible for Medicare Part D increased from \$295 to \$310 and the Partial Extra Help increased from \$60 to \$62. When case managers are reviewing client cases with a standard deductible for Medicare Part D, they must request proof of the Medicare Part D and the Partial Extra Help following established procedures. Once proof is received, these amounts must be entered manually by the case manager. The premium portion of Medicare Part D must be entered on the Health Insurance window under 'Premium'. The case manager will then be prompted to go to the 'Medical Expenses' window to enter co-pays and/or deductible, if applicable.

**Note:** The Full Extra Help deductible remains at \$0.

The Medical Expenses window has been programmed to accept the new deductible amounts. The Health Insurance window did not require any reprogramming; it will continue to accept the varying Medicare Part D premium amounts.

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**Medicare Part B  
Changes**

The base Medicare Part B Premium has been changed to \$110.50 as of January 1, 2010 for the following clients:

- State Medicare Buy-ins;
- Newly approved RSDI clients;
- “Direct Bills” (premium is not deducted from RSDI benefits); and
- Other clients who have changes reported to SSA after January 1 that allows SSA to increase the premium.

No case manager action is needed to adjust the premium rates. However, case managers should know that varying amounts of Medicare Part B Premiums will range from \$96.40 to \$110.50. Any new clients who are eligible for Medicare Part B Premiums should be asked how much they are paying to ensure the correct amount is entered into BEACON.

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**Questions**

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

Systems questions should be directed to the EOHHS Customer Service Center.

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