

models. This includes implementing a Regional Collaborative for all homeless and at-risk families, a pilot program for those individuals facing chronic homelessness and extending HMIS training and implementation.

Although I began this letter describing the professional practices that I've observed in local offices, I realize that delivering lasting results and self-sufficiency for our clients requires a commitment at every level within our Department, including Executive staff at Central Office. For this reason, we've also built the ongoing implementation of our Central Office reorganization, internal controls and BEACON "replatforming" into our Agency priorities for 2006. The plans for a BEACON "replatforming" are beginning in 2006, but implementation will actually extend over the next few years. The new application will be called BEACON 3.0. All the functionality of BEACON 2.0 will be included in this new application as well as additional enhancements.

It will be another busy year, but I'm looking forward to it. Your help in implementing these priorities is essential. I'll continue to keep you up-to-date on the progress we're making in these areas.

As I am writing this, I have just heard the news of Coretta Scott King's passing. February is Black History Month and her passing calls to mind all that she and her husband have helped to accomplish in the struggle for Civil Rights over the past few decades. Their efforts have brought us all to a better place. Maintaining quality customer service is in many ways connected to the ideals that these great leaders inspired.

In working to eliminate poverty, hunger and homelessness, it is now our challenge to help realize their aspirations.

Sincerely,



John Wagner, Commissioner

From the Hotline

The questions below pertain to flexible credits and how they are treated in the Food Stamp Program. Refer to *Transitions*, January 2006, FYI "Pay Stubs with Flexible Credits" for more details on this topic.

- Q.** An applicant came into our office today and applied for food stamp benefits. She is employed at a company that offers health insurance through an "employee medical credit" of \$400 each month. My applicant has chosen to enroll in this medical insurance option. Therefore, her gross monthly income amount includes an additional \$400. If she had chosen to forgo the health insurance coverage, the \$400 would not be added to her gross monthly income. Is this flexible credit countable as earned income?
- A.** No. Flexible credits provided by employers that are used for benefits such as health insurance or life insurance but cannot be taken as cash by the employee, are not countable as income.

Unless you are familiar with the terms of your

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applicant's flexible credit program, follow-up is required. Remember to make note of the terms of the flexible credit on the Narratives Tab. Written documentation from the employer or a collateral contact should be indicated in the narrative as well.

- Q.** A food stamp recipient receives an additional \$35 flexible credit each month that she can use to pay for benefits such as child care or medical insurance costs. She has chosen not to take advantage of these benefits and therefore receives an additional \$35 each month in her gross pay amount. Is this flexible credit countable as earned income in the Food Stamp Program?
- A.** Yes. The Food Stamp Program treats this flexible credit as countable earned income. Again, it is important to remember to

make note of the terms of the flexible credit on the Narratives Tab. Written documentation from the employer or a collateral contact should be indicated in the narrative as well.

From the Forms File

New Form

15-205-0106-05

LDSC (1/2006)

Learning Disability Screening/Assessment Consent/Declination Form

This form is completed when a learning disability screening and assessment request is made. The Spanish version is on the reverse side.

Revised Form/Revised Brochure

18-021-0106-05

TPLI (Rev. 1/2006)

Third Party Liability Indicator

The Third Party Liability Unit address and fax number have been revised on the form.

02-820-0106-05

02-822-0106-05 (S)

CC-1 Mail (Rev.1/2006)

Child Care - Getting and Keeping Child Care

References to the Office for Child Care Services (OCCS) have been changed to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) contact information has been updated.

The following forms listed below are now available in Spanish.

13-271-0206-05

4Family Release (S)

4Family Release of Information Between DTA and DPH F.O.R. Families

13-076-0206-05

TES-WN-13 (S)

Warning Notice of Noncompliance