

with CAP, we expected about 50% of those noticed to access their new EBT accounts. This expectation was quickly surpassed; our massive outreach helped over 22,000 households in Massachusetts. Now, thousands of our elderly and disabled are able to absorb the higher cost of living while thousands of federal dollars are being injected into our local economy.

The unparalleled success of CAP happened, in large part, because of local office staff who helped not only to respond to the more routine questions about the Food Stamp Program, but also to expedite the issuance of replacement PINs, Bay State Access Cards, and Authorized Representative Cards, when otherwise many SSI applicants may have been unable to access their benefits before these benefits expired. I also want to personally thank staff of Local Office Quality Control who helped to staff the phone bank to respond to the many client inquiries and all of the other Department staff who worked to make Bay State CAP a success.

In the coming months, we'll be implementing Phase Two of CAP outreach. I'm confident that with your help, we can once again surpass our objectives. Since its implementation, we've received a number of thank-you notes from new clients who have joined the Bay State CAP Food Assistance Program. I'd like to join these individuals in thanking you for a job well done.

Sincerely,



John Wagner, Commissioner



**COMMUNICATION is the KEY**

## From the Hotline

The following questions relate to the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Food Stamp Initiative procedures that are found in Field Operations Memo 2005-13. These questions have been raised by both DTA and DMH staff.

Note: All of the situations below also pertain to Department of Mental Retardation applications. See Field Operations Memo 2005-41 for detailed instructions on group home applications.

- Q.** I have a DMH application without a penalty warning, RR/FSP-1B. Is this a complete application?
- A.** No. All DMH application packages must contain a signed RR/FSP-1B. If it is missing, contact the DMH case manager/vendor and explain that the application cannot be processed without this important form. If you continue to have problems, speak with the DMH liaison in your TAO. The liaison can contact the DMH liaison to resolve the problem.
- Q.** I have a DMH application for an individual living independently. Do I need proof of identity to process this case?

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
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| FYI - Policy Online Changes       | 9  |
| Increased EA Eligibility Standard | 10 |

**A.** No. You do not need a birth certificate, photo ID or any other proof of identity for DMH cases subject to Field Operations Memo 2005-13. The DMH case manager/vendor, by referring the case, can be considered a “collateral” contact for the purpose of verifying identity. In addition, the SSN, once matched in the overnight batch process, also serves to verify identity.

**Q.** Does a DMH applicant need to provide proof of utility payments if the Other Agency Certification of Shelter Expenses form (FS-ACSE) is submitted?

**A.** No. If the DMH application contains the FS-ACSE, stating that the individual pays utilities separate from rent, then that is sufficient.

The DMH case worker/vendor works closely with DMH applicants and can certify the shelter and utility expenses of the individual.

The FS-ACSE was created to allow the DMH case manager/vendor to certify the shelter expenses. Only if the FS-ACSE is **not** part of the application should the rent receipt or utility bills be requested.

**Q.** For a DMH SSI-only applicant, do I need to request proof of the SSI benefit amount?

**A.** No. Per Field Operations Memo 2005-13, part of the streamlined process for this initiative requires DTA to use SDX income information, whenever possible.

Exception: If the DMH case manager/vendor incorrectly believed RSDI income to be SSI income, then a VC-1 must be sent to the applicant requesting proof of the RSDI income and the assets.

**Q.** I have had several conversations with DMH staff who want me to immediately deny AUs that are over income and to do so without exploring other expenses or ways to exempt income (e.g.. trust funds). What should I do?

**A.** You should explore all possible eligibility areas for the applicant. Also, explain clearly to the DMH case manager/vendor the reasons you are requesting the additional information so that it is clear that you are working to help the client.

**From the Forms File**

AU Managers are reminded that revised letterhead is available. This new letterhead reflects a personnel change in the Secretariat of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).

**New Forms**

- 13-225-0805-05*
- EA 20 Mile Decline (8/2005)*
- Declination of Transfer*

This form is used when a family residing in a shelter beyond 20 miles of their home community declines a transfer to another shelter. Refer to Field Operations Memo 2005-35 for more information.

The following two forms are used when a family appears to be Emergency Assistance (EA) eligible needs additional time to