



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance*


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Acting Commissioner

**Online Guide Transmittal 2022-49
June 21, 2022**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: COVID-19: Standard Medical Deduction Waiver

Overview

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has approved the Department's request to allow elderly and/or disabled clients to self-declare medical expenses within the standard medical deduction (SMD) range. This range includes eligible out-of-pocket medical costs greater than \$35, and less than or equal to \$190 per month. This flexibility will allow clients to access the SMD deduction without the burden of collecting multiple receipts and documents, while also maximizing the households SNAP benefits. In addition, staff will see a reduction in the administrative burden of reviewing and entering documents, as the Department prepares for the sunset of the Public Health emergency.

However, to receive a medical expense deduction above \$190, clients will still be required to submit verification.

To support this change, there will be system enhancements to both BEACON and DTA Connect. In the meantime, a new Online Guide page (in the COVID-19 book) details the temporary procedures that staff must follow to implement this change using the existing BEACON workflow.

Staff are encouraged to use a new temporary screening tool known as the “Medical Expense Tracker” that is transmitted with this update. The Medical Expense Tracker aims to streamline the process of recording the medical information, differentiating between recurring and non-recurring expenses, and determining whether a household must verify the medical expenses via self-declaration or documentary evidence.

Lastly, as the Department implements the expanded SMD waiver, staff must remember that, like the Interim Report, the COVID-19 recertification form does not ask about medical expenses. Therefore, if a client indicates no change on a COVID-19 recertification form, staff must not remove the medical expenses on file.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of the new procedures involving medical expense verification and the corresponding updates to the Online Guide.

**New Online
Guide Pages**

Topic:	COVID-19
Page:	Standard Medical Deduction Waiver

**Revised Online
Guide Pages**

Topic:	COVID-19
Page:	COVID-19 Streamlined SNAP Recertification Process and Interview Waiver

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
