

Procedural Standard 01-8
January 2,2007

TO: DES Staff

FR: A.E. Adams, Ph.D., Director, Disability Evaluation Services

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RE: Processing a New Application with an Open Case in Progress.

Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum is to define the process for tracking, locating and combining cases in progress, when a subsequent application for another program is received. Subsequent applications may represent dual applications, for both MassHealth and one of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) programs, or applications for each of the DTA programs. In either case, DES procedure requires combining the files of a single individual and resolving any inconsistencies to ensure proper case processing.

The memo further identifies the staff responsible for this process, as well as how the disability review staff should proceed with the review. This procedure applies regardless of whether the case in progress is a MassHealth case or one of the two Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) programs, Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC) or Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC),

Procedure: When an application is received at DES, the Medical Records staff person responsible for reviewing new applications carefully researches the case. If there is a case currently in process for another agency's program (MassHealth versus DTA), he/she enters the new application in DEScovery as well as a progress note documenting receipt of a dual application and forwards the case to the Disability Assistants Unit for **further** processing.

Revision fi 1. Supersedes PS 01-8 "Processing a DMA case with an open DTA case in progress", originally issued December 14, 2001 and obsoletes PS 99-12 "Reassignment of Open Cases to Team 100" dated August 30, 1999.

Occasionally an application is received for a DTA program when there is already an active application in DES for the other DTA program (EAEDC versus TAFDC). Since the DTA programs are mutually exclusive, the Medical Records staff person, upon identifying this situation, changes the case in DEScovery, enters a progress note, flags the case and forwards it to the Disability Assistants Unit for further processing.

Upon receipt of the subsequent supplement, the Disability Assistant opens the new case and then reviews the new information to compare demographics, treating sources, and impairments in order to verify the appropriateness of combining the cases. The DA also identifies the presence, if any, of new treating sources and/or new impairments and generates Request for Information (RFI) letters for additional sources. Finally the DA locates the case in process and combines the files.

The newly combined case remains with the Disability Reviewer (DR) who has the earlier open case. The assigned Disability Reviewer enters a progress note to confirm receipt of the combined applications and continues to process the case under the usual consolidated review procedures.

Summary

Appropriate handling of applications for an individual for different disability programs, especially those received while an application for another program remains open, is critical to maintaining the integrity of the DES consolidated review process. Therefore, when a subsequent application for the same person is received in DES while a case for another program is still open, whether MassHealth or DTA-originated, **the subsequent application must be combined with the existing case, developed as appropriate and completed by the DR originally assigned to the case.**