

Assistance offices. I realize that this task has demanded special consideration and understanding since many evacuees are unable to meet the usual requirements of our programs. Patience with our Central Office staff as we respond to the changing demands of evacuation planning is also apparent and appreciated.

Over the past few weeks, I've watched clients under extreme conditions confronting their predicament with grace and fellow employees placed in compromised situations responding with unwavering care and concern. Although it sometimes takes an unfortunate event, it is clear that all of us are willing to step back and put this challenge in perspective. For many of us, this tragic event has reaffirmed our belief in the things that matter above all else both at work and in our homes. While the state's Hurricane Katrina follow-up efforts are ongoing, we here at the Department are continuing to do what we do best by seizing every opportunity to determine the needs of our clients and help them on their path to lasting self-sufficiency. It has been a privilege to serve with so many of you in this effort.

Sincerely,



John Wagner, Commissioner



**COMMUNICATION is the KEY**

## From the Hotline

This month's column contains questions concerning fraud and overpayment procedures. For more information on this topic, refer to 106 CMR 706.200 through 706.296 for TAFDC and EAEDC and 106 CMR 367.495 through 367.950 for Food Stamp Program details.

**Q.** How do I know if I should make a fraud referral or an overpayment referral?

**A.** A fraud referral is submitted only when the recipient intentionally fails to report a change. If the failure to report a change was either unintentional or our agency's error, then submit the matter as an overpayment referral and calculate the overpayment for each category of assistance. Select either "Unintentional" or "Agency error" for the Overpayment Type on the AR Referral window. Also, remember to complete the Narratives Tab explaining the details of your recipient's circumstances.

**Q.** When I am completing a fraud referral, should I also complete the overpayment section on the AR Referral window?

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- A.** Yes. Always complete the overpayment section for all affected categories of assistance, even on fraud referrals. If you are unsure of the overpayment amount on a fraud referral, then remember to at least indicate the categories of assistance where you believe the recipient violated program rules and potentially was overpaid.
- Q.** Once I submit my fraud referral, where will it go?

**A.** All BEACON referrals (Fraud, Overpayment, Agency Error, and Aid Paid Pending) are received by the Fraud and Overpayment Referral Screening Unit. (FORS). This unit is referred to as “CEO” on the BEACON windows. It is a unit under Fraud Investigations and Recoveries. FORS may send a referral to the Fraud Investigation Unit (formerly known as the Administrative Disqualification Unit - ADU) or the Bureau of Special Investigation (BSI).

The majority of fraud referrals are sent to the Fraud Investigation Unit for an investigation and administrative disqualification hearing.

- Q.** Whom can I contact if I have a question about a fraud referral or an Intentional Program Violation (IPV)?
- A.** Call the Fraud and Overpayment Referral Screening Unit (FORS) at 617-348-5669 if you want to correct or complete a rejected referral.

## Quality Corner

This month we will review two NPA errors. One involves an able-bodied adult (ABAWD), and the other involves household composition in a mixed household.

### Unemployed Adult

A client applied for FS benefits on September 1, 2004 and reported that she was receiving Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits. Receipt of the UC benefits made her exempt from the FS Work Requirements. Shortly after the FS AU was established, she received her last UC check dated September 19<sup>th</sup>. BEACON received Unearned Income match information in October which confirmed that the UC check of September 19 was the client’s last check and the remaining balance of UC benefits was zero.

At initial certification, the AU was put on Universal Semiannual Reporting (USR) with a certification period of August 8, through February 4, 2005. Since the client’s UC benefits stopped on September 19, 2004, she was then subject to the FS Work Requirements. The AU Manager did not delete the UC benefits until the client reported the change in December. Consequently, there was an under-issuance for October and November.