



Transitions

January 2014

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Quality Corner

This month we will review an error in a Non-Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP case and an invalid denial.

Failure to Follow Up on Match Information

This NPA SNAP household was a 34-year-old client who lived alone. At reapplication, the case was certified as a Change Reporting case from December 14, 2011 through December 13, 2012. The client reported no income and consequently received the maximum benefit amount of \$200 for a household size of one.

QC determined through a BEACON match that the client became employed on April 20, 2012. Since the household was certified as a Change Reporting case, the client should have reported the new job and the earnings. Based on the unreported earned income, the household was ineligible for SNAP benefits during the review month. This caused an overissuance of \$200.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Although the client failed to report that he was employed, the error could have been prevented if the New Hire Match that appeared on the Match History tab in BEACON had been processed. The match was available in BEACON on May 8, 2012, two months prior to the review month (July 2012). Case managers are reminded of the importance of checking the Match History tab. If this practice is applied, it will help to prevent payment errors.

Since it was determined that this client was overpaid, a referral must be made to the Fraud Overpayment Referral Screening Unit by clicking on My Office tab/Accounts Receivable in BEACON.

Invalid Denial: Interview and Notice of Missed Interview

A web application was received on July 23, 2012. An appointment letter for a telephone interview was sent to the client on August 17, 2012 for an interview on August 27, 2012. A BEACON narrative dated August 21, 2012 indicated that the case manager tried to contact the client on August 21, 2012 to conduct an interview. A Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI) was mailed to the client on the same day, informing the client he missed a scheduled interview and must be interviewed by August 22, 2012. The case was denied on August 22, 2012 for failure to complete the application process. This is an invalid denial because the case was denied before the scheduled interview date.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Case managers are reminded that an application should not be denied without the client being given the opportunity to complete the application process. The interview should have been scheduled to take place prior to the denial on day-30. In addition, a day-30 denial was not appropriate when the application interview was scheduled to take place after day-30.



All SNAP applications require that the case manager contact the client for an interview within two days of the receipt of the application. If no contact can be made, an appointment letter for a telephone interview must be sent through BEACON by Day 2. For more information regarding SNAP application processing, see Field Operations Memo 2006-30.

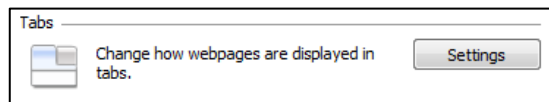
Training Corner

Opening and Using Multiple Internet Explorer Windows

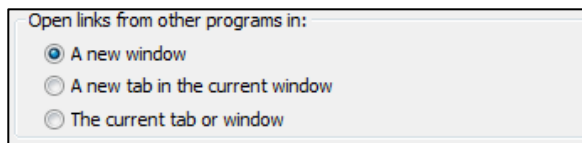
In last month's Training Corner, you learned how to best utilize the new larger 24" monitors by snapping two or more windows side-by-side. However, if you open multiple applications in Internet Explorer they will open up as separate Tabs, not as separate windows, which means you cannot snap them into place side-by-side. To ensure that separate Internet Explorer windows open each time you open a new internet application, follow these steps.

Changing Browser Settings

1. **Click** on the Windows start button () on the taskbar.
2. In the right-hand panel, **click** on *Control Panel*. A window will appear entitled *Adjust your computer's settings*.
3. From the window that appears, **click** on *Internet Options* () and the *Internet Properties* window will appear.
4. From the *Internet Properties* window, on the "General" tab, locate "Tabs" (see below) and **click** on *Settings*. A window entitled *Tabbed Browsing Settings* will appear.



5. From the *Tabbed Browsing Settings* window, locate the area of the window entitled "Open Links from other programs in:" and **click** the radio button next to "a new window."



6. **Click** *Ok*.
7. **Click** *Ok* a second time.
8. Close all current Internet Explorer windows.
9. Open new Internet Explorer windows; each will open as a window rather than as a tab.



From the Hotline Index

A “From the Hotline” Index of the questions and answers written in *Transitions* during 2013 has been compiled below. The Index is intended to provide quicker access to policy and procedural information. Please remember that this Index explains policy/procedure as of the month/year in which the questions and answers were issued.

Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program		
Topic	Month	Related Procedure/Policy, 106 CMR:
Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)	March	701.390, Field Operations Memo 2010-30
Assets, Burial Insurance	February	321.120(F)
Assets, Cash Surrender Value of Life Insurance	February	321.120(E)
Assets, Prepaid Burial	February	321.140(N)
Date Assistance Begins	September	702.150
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and Residency	September	Operations Memo 2013-34
Income, Countable	May	321.210
Income, Countable, Unearned	May	321.210(B)
Income, Lump Sum	February	321.240
Residency, Verification of	September	702.340, Operations Memo 2010-55
Social Security (RSDI) Benefits	May	321.210(B)
Vendor Payments	October	706.600, Operations Memo 2013-48
Vendor Payments for Mismanagement of Funds	October	706.620
Verification and Determination of Income, Unearned	May	321.290(C)
Verification Methods	September	702.340
Verification Methods	October	702.340
Verification, Responsibility for	October	702.310
Veterans' Services Benefits	May	702.720(B)

(Continued on Page 5)

**From the Hotline Index** *(Continued from Page 4)*

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program		
Topic	Month	Related Procedure/Policy, 106 CMR:
Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)	March	360.250, Field Operations Memo 2010-30
Assets, Noncountable	February	363.140(B)
Assets, Nonrecurring Lump Sum Payments	February, June	363.130(D)
Assets, Other Noncountable	June	363.140(G)
Categorically Eligible Households	February	365.180
Contradictory Information	August	361.630
Determining Deductions	May	364.400
Education Loans, Grants and Scholarships	May	363.230(D)
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and Residency Requirements	September	Operations Memo 2013-34
Expedited Processing and DOR Bank Matches	August	365.820, Operations Memo 2013-31
Expedited Service	August	365.830 and 365.810
Expenses, Dependent Care	April	364.400(D)
Household Concept	July	361.200(A)
Income, Countable, Earned	June	363.230(H)
Income, Countable, Unearned	May, July	363.220(B)
Income, Excluded	February	363.230(I)
Income, Excluded by Law	March	363.230(K)
Income, Excluded, Vendor Payments	October, May	363.230(B)
Lump Sum Payments, Nonrecurring	February, June	363.130(D)
Parental Control Rule	July	361.200(A)
Prorating Initial Month's Benefits	September	364.650
Questionable Information	August	361.620
Residency, Verification of	September	361.640 and Operations Memo 2010-55
Senior Community Service Employment Program	March	363.230(K)

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**From the Hotline Index** *(Continued from Page 5)*

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (continued)		
Topic	Month	Related Procedure/Policy, 106 CMR:
Vendor Payments	May	363.220(C)
Verification Requirements, Expedited	August	365.830
Verification Sources	September	361.640(A)
Veterans' Services Benefits	May	363.220(B), Field Operations Memo 2009-13

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children		
Topic	Month	Related Procedure/Policy, 106 CMR:
Absence, Temporary	September	203.660
Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)	March	701.390
Assets, Burial Insurance	February	204.120(F)
Assets, Life Insurance, Cash Surrender Value	February	204.120(E)
Assets, Prepaid Funeral Arrangement	February	204.140(N)
Calculation of Grant Amount	June	204.500
Child Care Services	April	207.210(A)
Date Assistance Begins	September	702.150
Dependent Child, Under Age 18	July	203.570
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)	September	Operations Memo 2013-34
Employment Services Program, Educational Component	December	207.140
Employment Services Program, Educational Component, Participation	April	207.140
Employment Services Program, Participation Components	December	207.120
Employment Services Program, Support Services	April	207.210(A)
Extension of 24-Month Benefits	December	203.210(A), Operations Memo 2013-38
Grant Amount	June	204.500

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**From the Hotline Index** *(Continued from Page 6)*

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (continued)		
Topic	Month	Related Procedure/Policy, 106 CMR:
Income, Countable	May	204.210
Income, Lump sum	February	204.240
Income Tax Refund	June	204.120(I)
Income, Test of Eligibility	May , June	204.260
Income, Unearned	May	204.210
	July	204.210
Relationship	July	203.585
Residency Verification	September	702.340, Operations Memo 2010-55
Temporary Absence	September	203.660
Transitional Child Care Services	April	207.210(A)
Vendor Payments	October	706.600, Operations Memo 2013-48
Vendor Payments for Mismanagement of Funds	October	706.620
Vendor Payments for TAFDC Sanction	October	702.610
Verification Methods	September	702.340
Verification Methods	October	702.340
Verification, Responsibility for	October	702.310
Verifying Continued Eligibility	October	702.311
Veterans' Services Benefits	May	702.720(A)



Operations Memos

SNAP–Medex Premium Rate Changes

SNAP

Operations Memo 2014-1

This Operations Memo:

- announces changes to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Medex premiums for 2014;
- identifies the non-group Medex plans that have changed and the corresponding rate change;
- provides information about updates to SNAP cases and Medex premium amounts; and
- provides information about the 2014 Medex Premium Rate Change Report that will be emailed to all TAOs.

Social Security/SSI COLA for TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP

All

Operations Memo 2014-2

This Operations Memo announces the 2014 Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

Each year the Social Security Administration (SSA) implements a Benefit Adjustment sometimes called a Cost of Living Adjustment or COLA, for all recipients of Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) and Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI). This year's SSA Benefit Adjustment is a 1.5% increase in the SSA benefits that will cause a decrease in DTA benefits for a large number of the Department's clients in all programs. This Operations Memo:

- explains that BEACON will update and recalculate all households affected by the Benefit Adjustment;
- instructs case managers about how to identify COLA cases that may require their attention and how to resolve any discrepant information that is transmitted by SSA;
- informs department staff about changes in the Medicare Part B and Part D Premiums; and
- includes examples of five Streamweaver notices that will be sent to the affected households.

Operations Memos

Electronic Document Management (EDM) Release I

All

Operations Memo 2014 – 3, EDM Release I - EDMC Mail Facility Processing Responsibilities

Operations Memo 2014 – 3 A, EDM Release I - DTA myWorkspace Functionality and DTA Clerical Staff Responsibilities

Operations Memo 2104 – 3 B EDM Release I - DTA Clerical Staff Responsibilities

Operations Memo 2014 – 3 C, EDM Release I - EDM Case Manager and Central Office Business Unit Responsibilities

Effective January 31, 2014, DTA will implement Electronic Document Management (EDM), Release I. Release I focuses on implementing EDM and DTA myWorkspace (MWS) to facilitate the centralized scanning and distribution of postal mail.

These four Operations Memos provide instructions to DTA staff for the day-to-day processing of postal mail upon implementation of Release I.

Operations Memo 2014 – 3, EDM Release I - EDMC Mail Facility Processing Responsibilities advises staff of the EDMC mail clerk responsibilities and the relationship of DTA myWorkspace to the EDM process.

Operations Memo 2014 – 3 A, EDM Release I - DTA myWorkspace Functionality describes the MWS functionality

Operations Memo 2014 – 3 B EDM Release I - DTA Clerical Staff Responsibilities describes the DTA clerical role upon receipt of the digitalized documents.

Operations Memo 2014 – 3 C, EDM Release I - EDM Case Manager and Central Office Business Unit Responsibilities provides case managers and Central Office Business Unit staff with guidance for processing tasks retrieved from MWS.

TAFDC and SNAP: 2014 Federal Poverty Guidelines

TAFDC and SNAP

Operations Memo 2014-4

Operations Memo 2014-4 informs staff that the 2014 Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) federal poverty guidelines were increased and published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2014. The TAFDC and SNAP charts and tables affected by the poverty guidelines posted at www.mass.gov/dta have been updated to reflect the increase in the poverty guidelines.

Effective February 3, 2014, BEACON will begin using the increased eligibility standards in the calculation of income eligibility for TAFDC teen parents under age 18 living with a parent and in the gross monthly income test for categorically eligible SNAP households.

See 106 CMR 204.236 for TAFDC and 106 CMR 364.976; 365.180 for SNAP.

Operations Memos

SNAP: Revised Paper Applications, Recertification and Annual Reporting Forms

SNAP

Operations Memo 2014-5

The Department has updated the paper versions of both the SNAP Benefits Application and the Simplified SNAP Application for Elderly Applicants. This is based on a USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) evaluation of the Department's SNAP applications and because of new agency initiatives, including Electronic Document Management. Many of the additions can be found in the Rights, Responsibilities and Penalties notice. Additionally, this Operations Memo informs TAO staff about updates to four SNAP forms.

All changes made to paper versions of the application forms have also been made to downloadable versions on DTA's website. Updates to the Spanish and Portuguese language versions of the applications have been made and versions in additional languages are forthcoming. The revised applications will be available from Policy Online in the Online Forms folder and from DTA's website during the first week of February. Offices will be notified prior to the distribution of the paper applications.

This Operations Memo informs staff about revisions made to the following forms:

- SNAP Benefits Application;
- Simplified SNAP Application for Elderly Applicants;
- Rights, Responsibilities and Penalties Notice;
- SNAP Recertification Form;
- SNAP Elderly Disabled Recertification Form;
- SNAP Annual Report Form; and
- SNAP Interim Report Form.

FYI

Direct Deposit Requirements for TAFDC and EAEDC Grantees

Remember that the Department requires participation in Direct Deposit for any TAFDC or EAEDC grantee who has an active bank account. Also, any TAFDC or EAEDC grantee who establishes a bank account is required to cooperate with the Direct Deposit process.

TAFDC or EAEDC grantees with bank accounts are not required to be on Direct Deposit when they:

- do not have public transportation within one mile of their residence or within one mile of the financial institution;
- are disabled and can verify lack of access to handicapped-accessible transportation services; or
- are victims of domestic violence and the co-owner of the account is the abuser.

See 106 CMR 706.410 for more information.

Diversity Quote

I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

TAO Meeting Notes