



# Transitions

July 2016

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## Quality Corner

This month we will review a medical expense error and an invalid denial.

### **Incorrect Entering of Medical Expenses**

This was a household of one. At the time of the recertification, the client was receiving RSDI of \$1,317 monthly, paying rent in the amount of \$510 monthly, and had been receiving the heating/cooling SUA from H-EAT benefits. The client also had medical expenses totaling \$432 monthly that had been verified at a previous recertification. The grantee reported only a change in the rent amount. Upon authorization of the recertification on November 24, 2014, the case manager processed the case with the rent change and gave the client the heating/cooling SUA by answering Yes to the *pay/share heating costs* question on the SUA page. The client was approved for \$172 monthly in SNAP benefits.

During the January 2016 Quality Control review, it was determined that at the prior recertification of SNAP benefits in November 2012, the client had originally been receiving SNAP with his disabled wife as a household of two. At the November 2012 recertification, the client reported medical expenses for both himself and his wife. Most of the medical expenses belonged to the client's wife; however, the case manager totaled the combined medical and dental care expenses and evenly split the amount between the client and his wife. As a result, each individual was credited with a medical and dental care expense of \$346.92 monthly. In March 2014, the Fraud Investigation Data Match (FIDM) Unit discovered a death match for the client's wife. She was subsequently removed from the SNAP case. As a result, when the grantee was recertified in November of 2014, he was credited with medical expenses that had belonged to his wife. The client had medical expenses of his own but he was only eligible for the \$155 standard medical deduction. This misapplication of medical expenses, along with incorrectly answering Yes to the *pay/share heating costs* question on the SUA page, resulted in an overissuance of SNAP benefits in the amount of \$156. In addition, the client was not selected to be reauthorized for H-EAT benefits as the information on BEACON indicated that the client paid heating/cooling expenses.

### **What's a Case Manager to Do?**

When entering medical expenses in BEACON, the expenses must be attributed to the correct household member. In this case, both the client and his wife did incur medical expenses and were eligible for a medical deduction but the amount of those expenses differed greatly between the client and his wife. If the expenses had been attributed to the correct individual, SNAP benefits would have decreased to the correct amount when the wife was removed from the household in March 2014. When the case was recertified in November 2014, the client reported no changes in medical expenses. Not knowing that the medical expenses were entered incorrectly, the case manager processed the recertification using the medical expenses already on file. Any eligible expense, not just medical expenses, incurred by a household must always be attributed and itemized under the individual that incurred the expense.

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## Quality Corner *(Continued from Page 2)*

The other factor that contributed to the error was the SUA. The only responsibility case managers have for the SUA page is to enter the answers the client provides. In this case, the client reported no change to the SUA question so the case manager should not have answered Yes to the *pay/share heating costs* on the SUA page.

### **Issuing a Verification Checklist (VC-I) before client is interviewed**

On November 14, 2015, a Simplified SNAP Application for Elderly Applicants was received. The case manager attempted a cold call, was unable to reach the client, and scheduled a telephone interview for November 20, 2015. The case manager then issued a VC-I requesting verification based on the information reported on the SNAP Application. On November 20, 2015, the client missed the scheduled telephone interview and a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI) was issued. On December 14, 2015 the case was automatically denied for *Fail to submit the required verifications*.

At the December 2015 Quality Control review, the denial was determined to be invalid as the client was never interviewed. This case should have been denied for *Failure to Complete the FS Application Process* due to the missed interview.

### **What's a Case Manager to Do?**

For SNAP applications, case managers must always complete the interview before sending a VC-I in accordance with current SNAP application processing procedures. Although some applications are received with little or no verifications, the case manager cannot assume what verifications are outstanding solely based on the information reported on the SNAP application. An interview must be completed to determine if additional verifications are required along with any missing verifications not provided with the application. Only then should a VC-I be issued. Since an outstanding VC-I was present in the case described above on day 30, the case was automatically denied for *Fail to submit the required verifications*. If the VC-I had not been issued, the case would have closed for the correct reason.

## From the DTA Policy Procedure Mailbox

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your manager or supervisor email the **DTA Mailbox**.

- Q. 1.** My TAFDC client is caring for one grandchild and two grandnieces. To prove that these dependents are related to the grantee, must I show verification of each type of relationship across the generations, including grandparents, parents and siblings?
- A. 1.** Yes. However, remember that while the birth certificate is the most common form of verification for this requirement, other types of verification are also acceptable including marriage certificates, adoption papers, school or preschool records, or other government records indicating that members of the household are related, according to the guidelines established in 106 CMR 203.585. If none of these preferred documents are available, per 106 CMR 203.570(B), insurance policies, employment records, hospital records, court records, census records, or third party affidavits are also acceptable.
- Q. 2.** The grandnieces referred to in **Q. 1.** were only recently added to my TAFDC client's case because they moved in to the client's home a week ago. Today, the father of these same children came in to apply for TAFDC. He says he cares for his children during their visits to his home on the weekends and certain overnights during the week. How do I determine who has primary responsibility for day-to-day control of these children?
- A. 2.** Use the criteria established for TAFDC living arrangements outlined in 106 CMR 203.595 to determine who has primary responsibility for day-to-day care and control. Most commonly, school records can be used to verify this. If school records are unavailable or unclear on who has primary responsibility, then hospital or medical records; Public Housing Authority records; voluntary social service agency records; Head Start Program records; or day care center records may also be used. If there is Department of Children and Families (DCF) or court involvement, then any available information from these resources should also be considered in making this decision.
- Note:** BEACON rules require that the address for these children remains the same for both the TAFDC and SNAP households.

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## From the DTA Policy Procedure Mailbox *(Continued from Page 4)*

- Q. 3.** If a related adult who is a non-parent applies for TAFDC, is verification of legal guardianship or custody required?
- A. 3.** No. Proof of legal guardianship or custody is not a TAFDC requirement for adult grantees living with children. Requests for verification of legal custody from a non-parent should only be made under rare circumstances when, for example, you have reason to believe that the child may be at risk of harm in his/her current living arrangement . Also note that the SNAP definition of “parental control,” as described in 106 CMR 361.200(A) does not require legal guardianship or custody.
- Q. 4.** Are there times when proof of legal guardianship is required and if so, when?
- A. 4.** Yes. While proof of legal guardianship is not a TAFDC requirement, it is a requirement in the EAEDC Program unless good cause exists. See 106 CMR 320.400 for more detail.
- Q. 5.** Under what circumstances is verification of legal custody or guardianship required in EAEDC?
- A. 5.** In the EAEDC Program, caretaker families consisting of adults and children who are not related to one another must verify their legal custody or guardianship. If the caretaker does not have legal custody or guardianship of the child(ren), they must shall obtain legal custody or guardianship (or provide verification of good cause) within six months from the date assistance begins or the next eligibility review, whichever is later.



## Online Guide Transmittals

### Cross Programs – Migration of Special Services Payment System (SSPS) to BEACON

Online Guide Transmittal Update 2016-31

Effective with BEACON Build 48.4, the Special Services Payment System (SSPS) was integrated into BEACON. The SSPS mainframe system was integrated into BEACON effective Tuesday, 7/5/2016. Staff must now use BEACON to enter and authorize new SSPS payments and also release continuing protective payments. SSPS payments include mandatory and voluntary vendor payments; relocation benefits; immediate needs and funeral and final disposition benefits.

**Note:** All current protective payments have been terminated in the SSPS mainframe system and new invoices were created for the remaining months.

This move will improve customer service and financial management as well as reduce the flow of paper throughout DTA.

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of the changes to SSPS procedures and BEACON, including:

- new and modified pages for creating, modifying, approving and transmitting invoices ;
- new views; and
- the obsoleting of the Protective Payments Actuate Report and the creation of new Actuate reports.

*Operations Memo 2012-19, TAFDC and EAEDC – Relocation Benefit*, is now obsolete.

### SNAP – Residents of Institutions

Online Guide Transmittal Update 2016-33

SNAP

This Online Guide Transmittal informs staff that a new chapter and page entitled Residents of Institutions have been added to the Online Guide. The Residents of Institutions page informs staff of:

- SNAP eligibility requirements for those excepted from the residents of institution rule and offers guidance to case managers when addressing this information for SNAP households; and
- procedures for identifying clients who may be eligible for SNAP under the exception for residents of federally subsidized housing for the elderly built under either *Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959* or *Section 236 of the National Housing Act*. A list of known sites that were built under either *Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959* or *Section 236 of the National Housing Act* is now linked to the page.



## State Letters

### Rescission of Eligibility Requirements for Repatriated Citizens Regulations

State Letter 1371

Cross Programs

This State Letter transmits the following changes to Eligibility Requirements for Repatriated Citizen Regulations:

The Department is rescinding its Eligibility Requirements for Repatriated Citizens Regulations at 106 CMR 326, as the Department has determined that these regulations are duplicative of other agreements which establish terms of assistance to be provided to repatriated citizens.

This material is effective July 1, 2016.

### State Supplement Program to Supplemental Security Income Program Regulation - Technical Corrections and Language Simplifications

State Letter 1372

SSP

This State Letter transmits the following changes to the State Supplement Program to Supplemental Security Income Program regulations:

This regulation change involves technical corrections and language simplifications that do not change DTA's current policies or procedures, but will make the regulations easier to read and understand for clients, applicants, and the general public.

This material is effective July 1, 2016.

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### Diversity Quote

**We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow-men; and along those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and come back to us as effects.**

**Herman Melville (U.S. novelist and poet, 1819-1891)**



## From the Forms File

### Revised Brochures

25-670-0716-05

CI-DTA (Rev. 6/2015)

*How may we help you?*

04-040-0716-05

EAEDC-PB (Rev. 7/2016)

*Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children Program*

09-169-0716-05

SNAP-PB-E (Rev. 7/2016)

*The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*

02-210-0716-05

TAFDC-PB (Rev. 7/2016)

*Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program*

02-230-0716-05

TPB (Rev. 7/2016)

*Do You Need Transitional Assistance? Important Information for Teenage Parents*

17-150-0716-05

WPIB (Rev. 7/2016)

*The TAFDC Work Program: Your Pathway to Self-Sufficiency*

02-211-0716-05

YRTK-E (Rev. 7/2016)

*Your Right to Know*

The above brochures were revised due to implementation of Pathways. An initial shipment of English version brochures has been shipped to the TAOs so discard old versions of these brochures. Other language versions will be available soon.

### Obsolete Form

02-053-1014-05

02-167-1014-05(S)

VP/NFL-1 (Rev. 10/2014)

*Vendor Payment Recipient Appointment Letter (VP/NFL-1)*

02-030-1014-05

VP/NFL-2 (Rev. 10/2014)

*Vendor Payments Vendor Notification Letter (VP/NFL-2)*



## TAO Meeting Notes