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From the Commissioner

Dear Colleagues:

To better support our operations in Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs), and to fill critical management vacancies, I am pleased to announce the hiring of BERS A/Bs and the hiring and promotion of managers across the state. Please join me in congratulating our colleagues.

Eastern Region

In Boston, now that we are certain of the continued presence of two nearby offices, we decided to reinstate our previous management model of having one director in each office. Mary Flanigan will be the Director of **Dudley Square**, and Agnes Cunio will be the Director of **Newmarket Square**, effective immediately. Felix Arroyo will continue in his role as the Director of Customer Service and Community Relations for both offices. The management teams in both offices will continue to work together to ensure consistent customer service delivery for the city of Boston.

Dudley Square welcomes seven new BERS/AB case managers, who are participating in training.

In **Revere**, Elizabeth Bouras was promoted from BERS C to Assistant Director. Elizabeth started her new position on March 27th.

Northern Region

The **North Shore** office welcomes L. James Boyle, previously of the Training Unit, to his new post as Assistant Director. Jim began his new assignment on April 25th.

In **Fitchburg**, Meredith Heimo was promoted from BERS C to Assistant Director. She started her new position on March 20th.

Southern Region

The **Brockton** office introduces Sandra Pellicane as the Acting Director from her previous position as the Assistant Director. This appointment became effective March 13th.

Also, **Brockton** welcomes six new BERS A/B case managers who are currently participating in training.

(Continued on page 2)

From the Commissioner *(Continued from page 1)*

In **New Bedford**, we welcome back Nelson Abreu to the Department as he began his new role as the Assistant Director of that office on April 25th. Nelson previously worked for the Department from 2007 until he left the SNAP unit in Central office in January 2009.

Western Region

The **Springfield State** office welcomes Melissa Pietraszkiewicz as the Acting Director effective March 13th. Melissa was previously an Assistant Director in the Springfield Liberty office.

In the **Springfield Liberty** office, Nathan Skrocki is the new Assistant Director as of May 31st.

The **Southbridge** office welcomes one new BERS A/B case manager, who is currently participating in training.

Central Office

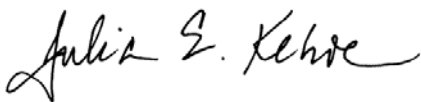
Central Office welcomes two new managers who started their assignments on May 9th. Tiffany Ampofo is the new Human Resources Liaison and Diversity Officer, and will also serve as the agency's ADA coordinator, replacing Dennis Johnson. Darin Martin is the Director of Policy Research in the Policy, Programs, and External Relations (PPER) unit.

Also in Central Office, Mary Sheehan is now the Acting Assistant Commissioner for Administration and Finance, and Ellen Osborne-Smith is now the Acting Budget Director. Tom Tiernan was promoted to the position of Director of Accounting within the Administration & Finance (A&F) unit.

Finally, the Department hired Frank Martinez Nocito as the Director of the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) and Yolanda Rowe as the Assistant Director of HIP. Frank began his new position on June 1st, and Yolanda will join us on June 20th.

We expect to receive approval on several other hires and promotions in the near future, and we will keep you apprised of any new developments. I appreciate your patience with what can sometimes be a lengthy approval process.

With much appreciation,



Julia E. Kehoe
Commissioner

Quality Corner

This month, we will discuss two errors. The first error is related to household composition rules while the second error is related to child support income.

Household Composition

The first case included a 21-year-old client and her one-year-old child. The case was certified as a Change Reporting case with a certification period from November 2010 through March 2011. A Shared Housing Form that was found in the case record indicated that the client and her daughter had moved in with the client's mother on September 1, 2010. While living with her mother, the client applied and was approved for SNAP benefits for a household of two – the client and her daughter.

The QC review determined that this case was established in error. Since the entire household's monthly income exceeded the maximum gross income standard and the case was ineligible, there was an overpayment error of \$367 for the review month.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Based on SNAP household composition rules at 106 CMR 361.200, 21-one-year-old daughter was not eligible for separate SNAP household status, even if she purchased and prepared food separately from her mother, was married and had a child of her own. Case managers are reminded that a child under 22 years old, living with a parent cannot have a SNAP household that does not include the parent, even if the parent chooses not to apply for SNAP benefits. Since the household composition information was available in the case record, this error could have been avoided.

Child Support Income Not Used - NPA Review Month February 2011

The second case included a client and her 13-year-old son. The case was certified as a Change Reporting case from November 2010 through November 2012. SNAP benefits were issued for a household of two, an calculated based on RSDI of \$717 for the client and \$53 for her son, as well as SSI of \$7.40 for the client and \$648.40 for her son. The household rent was \$975, and the client was eligible for the heating/cooling SUA.

The QC reviewer determined that the client had been in receipt of child support income in the amount of \$400 per month. This had been ongoing income before the client's most recent recertification. The erroneous exclusion of the child support income from the SNAP benefit calculation caused an overissuance of \$113 in the review month.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

This error could have been avoided if the case manager had checked pursued a Department of Revenue (DOR) child support match at the time of recertification. The DOR record showed that the client had been receiving child support through DOR for more than a year. Although the client did not report this income, the case manager should have checked the match history tab for outstanding matches before certifying this case. This would have revealed the DOR match, which could have been verified through the ViewDirect system and subsequently entered into BEACON as countable income.

From the Hotline

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your Hotline designee call the **Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478**.

- Q.** Once identity is verified for a SNAP applicant, is it considered a permanent verification?
- A.** Yes. Unless a change has occurred or you have reason to question the validity of the original documentation, identity must not be re-verified. For more information on verifying identity, refer to Operations Memo 2010-55.

Note: Identity is also considered a permanent verification in the TAFDC and EAEDC programs.

- Q.** There is a shortage of primary care physicians in our town, and my client told me he cannot find a physician to complete his EAEDC Medical Report. How can I assist him?
- A.** Competent Medical Authorities (CMAs) are not restricted to primary care physicians. If your applicant or client is unable to secure a timely appointment with a primary care doctor, remember that there are additional professional designations that are acceptable.

For TAFDC and EAEDC, a CMA may also include osteopaths, nurse practitioners or psychologists licensed by the Commonwealth, including physicians or psychiatrists from a Veterans Administration Hospital or clinic or from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. (For the limited purpose of diagnosing pregnancy and pregnancy-related disabilities, a nurse-midwife who meets the education and certification requirements mandated by state law and regulations is also acceptable.) For more information on CMAs, refer to 106 CMR 701.600(H).

- Q.** My EAEDC client asked me for help finding a doctor. He is having trouble locating a CMA who will accept MassHealth and complete his EAEDC Medical Report. Should I be assisting my client with finding a doctor or other CMA?
- A.** Yes. If an applicant or client indicates that assistance is needed with locating or being referred to a CMA, case managers should offer assistance. Refer to 106 CMR 702.315 for more information.
- Q.** How can I help my client locate health care facilities and CMAs that will accept MassHealth?
- A.** To identify MassHealth facilities and CMAs within your community, contact the MassHealth Member Customer Service Center at 1-800-841-2900.

Also to find *other* CMAs within your community, follow this link [Health Care Providers](#) for a listing of other doctors and available specialists.

From the Forms File

New Poster

Gain on-the-job experience as a DTA Works Intern!

26-430-0511-05

26-431-0611-05 (S)

DTA Works Poster

The *Gain on-the-job experience as a DTA Works Intern!* poster describes to clients the DTA Works Internship Program that is available to TAFDC clients. Please display this poster in the TAO waiting area.

New Flyer

Gain on-the-job experience as a DTA Works Intern!

26-440-0511-05

26-441-0611-05 (S)

DTA Works Flyer

The *Gain on-the-job experience as a DTA Works Intern!* flyer describes to clients the DTA Works Internship Program that is available to TAFDC clients. Please make this flyer available in the TAO waiting area.

Revised Brochure

Community Information - How may we help you?

25-672-0511-05(Haitian Creole)

25-673-0511-05 (Russian)

25-674-0511-05 (Cambodian–Khmer)

25-675-0511-05 (Portuguese)

25-676-0511-05 (Chinese)

25-671-0511-05 (Spanish)

25-677-0511-05 (Vietnamese)

CI_DTA (5/2011)

The Community Information brochure is now available in the following languages.

Obsolete Forms

The following forms are now obsolete.

02-646-1098-05

TAFDC-10 (Rev. 10/98)

State 60-Month Period Update Form

02-246-0296-05

Teen Ref LOQC (2/2006)

Teen Parent Closed Case Referral

Operations Memos

Voter Registration Procedures

Operations Memo 2011-18

All

The National Voter Registration Act requires the Department to provide voter registration services during the application, reevaluation and case maintenance processes for all programs. Applicants and clients may register either at the TAO or by using the mail-in form.

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to update voter registration procedures to case managers so clients may register to vote if they choose.

Franklin/Hampshire Employment and Training Shutdown

TAFDC

Operations Memo 2011-19

This Operations Memo advises staff that effective June 23, 2011, Franklin/Hampshire Employment and Training will suspend operations for the Greenfield TAO. Therefore, effective with this Operations Memo, no referrals to Franklin/Hampshire Employment and Training may be made by TAO staff in this TAO.

Franklin/Hampshire Employment and Training informed affected clients about this change during the month of May. Case managers should enroll clients in another activity that helps them meet the work program requirement.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Replacement of Food Lost Due to Tornadoes that Occurred on June 1, 2011

SNAP

Operations Memo 2011-20 & 20A

A storm, including several tornadoes, passed through Massachusetts on June 1, 2011, bringing significant damage to a number of communities. Among these communities, several were without power for a significant period of time, and FNS has deemed them eligible to receive mass replacement of SNAP benefits. FNS has approved the following communities as eligible for mass replacement of SNAP benefits: Brimfield, Brookfield, Monson and Wilbraham. To that end, MIS automatically issued benefits to current SNAP households residing in those communities. This Operations Memo:

- describes the waiver received from USDA;
- explains the SNAP benefit mass replacement process; and
- reminds case managers of procedures for household misfortune situations.

Operations Memo 2011-20A obsoletes Operations Memo 2011-20.

FYIs

Clarification on SNAP Denials before Day 30

Case managers are reminded that no SNAP application can be denied before day 30 if the denial reason is failure to complete the application process or failure to provide verifications.

Denials allowed before day 30 are limited to:

- finding the applicant ineligible due to a nonfinancial reason, such as student or noncitizen status; or
- finding the applicant ineligible due to a financial reason. The case manager must enter the financial information into BEACON as received and process the application. BEACON will deny the application on or before day 30 for the appropriate financial reason (e.g. excess income or assets).

While TAFDC and EAEDC regulations allow applications to be denied prior to day 30 if two application interview appointments have been missed, SNAP regulations do not allow this. Case managers must hold the SNAP application until day 30 before denying for failure to complete the application process. Also, even if the applicant has been granted an extension (INT-2) to provide verifications for cash program benefits, the SNAP application must be denied on day 30.

Reminder: If day 30 falls on a weekend or holiday, the SNAP application must be denied on the first business day immediately following the weekend or holiday.

Participation and Attendance Form Data Entry Online Guide

Participation and Attendance forms are sent to clients the first business day of the week (Monday, unless Monday is a holiday, then Tuesday) before the last Saturday of the month. These forms must be returned by the client no later than the 10th of the following month (or the first business day after the 10th of the month if the 10th is a weekend or holiday). Case managers must enter the forms into BEACON no later than the 18th of that month (or the first business day after the 18th of the month if the 18th is a weekend or holiday) to prevent a participation sanction from being created. Case managers may enter the prior participation month's returned Participation and Attendance forms onto BEACON up until the Friday before the last Saturday of the current month.

The Participation and Attendance Form Data Entry Online Guide gives TAO Staff a listing of the last day of the month that Participation and Attendance forms may be entered onto BEACON for the previous month's participation. This guide will be sent out to all TAFDC staff and will be added to Policy Online in the Online Guides option in late-June.

TAO Meeting Notes