



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Quality Corner	3
From the Hotline	4
Nurse Practitioner Added to the Definition of Competent Medical Authorities: A Clarification	5
Non-ESP Funded Activities and Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) Vocational Education Programs Referrals	5
Fraud Hotline Procedures	5
Diversity Quote	5
Transfer of Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) Clients to the Malden Centralized SSI Office	6
Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Agreement Client Survey	6
Disability Evaluation Services (DES) Psychological Consultative Examinations (CEs) in TAOs	6
Federal Minimum Wage Increase	7
The Change in Name from the Food Stamp Program to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	7

## From the Commissioner

Dear Colleagues,

Last month, I wrote to you about our progress with the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) Procurement, which our Department is conducting in conjunction with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and several of our sister agencies. This month, I have additional updates for you.

The CIES bidders selected for engagement were announced on July 16, 2009. Since then, the CIES Implementation Team has been working diligently to negotiate contracts, train staff, update BEACON, DTA Online, website information, brochures, orientation materials, and more.

As vendor contracts are approved, Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs) will be able to make client referrals to vendors. In the interim, if a TAO does not have any CIES vendors for appropriate components or activities, case managers should refer clients to non-ESP funded activities until a CIES vendor is approved. Once contracts have been finalized, you will receive a listing of the vendors, the TAOs they serve, and the slots available for each TAO.

The guidelines for referrals are outlined in **Field Operations Memo 2009-45** (TAFDC – Competitive Integrated Employment Services Procurement and ESP), published on July 31, 2009.

As you read in the Field Ops Memo, several activities are impacted by CIES:

- Post-Employment Services is no longer a stand-alone component/activity. Clients currently enrolled in Post-Employment Services will need to be enrolled in another activity.
- Job Search/Job Readiness, Skills Training Services, Supported Work, and Vocational Rehabilitation are now obsolete. Our new ESP models under CIES are:

**Model I: Employment Ready** helps TAFDC clients with *little or no barriers* to employment to obtain and maintain a job. It is best suited to clients age 20 or older who have been employed within the last two years and have a high school diploma, GED, or higher education degree. These activities are designed to help clients with work experience to adapt to the work environment and job search process.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 2)

**From the Commissioner** *(Continued from page 1)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

From the Forms File	7
FYI - Changes to DTA Online	8
FYI - Changes to the EOHHS Mass.gov DTA Homepage	8
Do You Know?	9

**Model II: Employment Training and Education** serves TAFDC clients age 20 or older with *minimal barriers* to employment that have a work history, have not reached their limit for education and training, and may or may not have a high school diploma or GED. These activities may include 4-12 weeks of training, followed by placements in work sites where clients can earn wages.

**Model III: Employment Supports** are designed to serve TAFDC clients age 20 or older (or under age 20 and have a high school diploma or GED) with *moderate barriers* to employment, who have reached the 12 month limit for education and training, have limited work history, and have started but never completed a Skills Training or Supported Work activity.

**Model IV: Enhanced Employment Supports** are for TAFDC clients age 20 or older with *significant barriers* to employment which may include a documented learning disability. Activities include a comprehensive assessment, job placement with initial employment services, and ongoing support services. Enhanced Employment Supports offers intensive services to obtain and maintain a job.

In order for DTA staff members to learn more about each component/activity, the Cash and Full Engagement Unit (CAFE) is scheduling “TAO Meet and Greets” with CIES vendors. You will hear more about these events during the coming weeks.

Several activities are *not* impacted by CIES, and referrals to these have not changed:

- Basic Education
- Post-secondary Education
- Community College programs
- Advanced Degree programs
- Young Parents Program (YPP)
- Full Employment Program (FEP)
- Non-ESP funded activities (including self-directed job search/job readiness)
- TAFDC Community Service
- Activities offered by the Office of Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)

Thank you for your continued patience with and participation in this process. I am confident the new components and activities under CIES will better assist our TAFDC clients to find and retain meaningful employment.

Sincerely

  
Julia E. Kehoe

## Quality Corner

This month, we will review two errors that occurred in NPA cases. The first error was caused by entering the net unemployment benefits on BEACON while the second error was caused by the incorrect entry of dependent care expenses.

### Unemployment Compensation that Included Child Support

This was a household of one adult whose sole income was unemployment compensation (UC). The Unemployment Insurance Information Inquiry screen showed his *WEEKLY UI RATE* as \$331 and his *WEEKLY PAY RTE* as \$166. Also listed on this screen was *WEEKLY CHLD SUP DED* of \$165.

The case manager entered the client's UC income on BEACON as \$166 weekly and entered \$165 weekly as child support paid. The SNAP calculation resulted in benefits of \$176 monthly and caused an overpayment error.

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

Entering the **net UC income** of \$166 weekly and the child support paid of \$165 weekly as a deduction on BEACON had the effect of doubling the child support deduction since the net UC income of \$166 already accounted for the child support paid.

The case manager should have entered the sum of the *WEEKLY PAY RTE* and the *WEEKLY CHLD SUP DED* ( $\$166 + \$165 = \$331$  weekly) as the client's gross UC income on BEACON. This would have amounted to \$1433.23 ( $\$331 \times 4.33$ ) in monthly UC benefits. Since the child support paid was already entered as an allowable deduction, the client would have received the correct SNAP benefit amount.

**Remember:** Field Operations Memo 2009-18, page 3, provides detailed procedures for counting the extra \$25 of UC benefits (temporary increase) based on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

### Child Care Expenses Incorrectly Entered on BEACON

This was a household of four certified as Universal Semiannual Reporting. The SNAP household consisted of the client and her three children. The client reported that she paid a total of \$100 per week in dependent care expenses for her three children; however, the SNAP calculation only showed a total deduction of \$288 for dependent care expenses. The correct amount should have been \$433 ( $\$100 \times 4.33$ ).

The BEACON record showed that an equal amount of dependent care expense was entered for each child. However, on one of the dependent care expense entries, the case manager had incorrectly clicked the *No* radio button in the FS Eligible Deduction field. Consequently, the dependent care expense amount for one child was not used in the SNAP benefit calculation. The client received a smaller child care expense deduction than she was entitled to receive, which resulted in a SNAP underpayment error of \$43.

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

Case managers must be careful to accurately complete both sections of the Dependent Care Expense window on BEACON. The first portion of the window asks the case manager to indicate if dependent care expenses exist. In this case, the case manager correctly indicated "Yes." The second portion of the window asks the case manager to indicate the program(s) in which the expense will be used. To allow the expense, the case manager should have indicated *Yes for FS Eligible Deduction* and *Yes for Allowable FS*. Procedures for entering dependent care expenses in BEACON can be found in BEACON Online Help.

## 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.** My client and her child are receiving SNAP benefits. She lost her job and recently reported receiving a sizeable one-time severance payment from her previous employer. How do I treat this payment?

**A.** Your client's one-time severance pay is considered a non-recurring lump sum payment. As such, it is noncountable as income but countable as an asset in the month received. Since your categorically eligible client is not subject to an asset test, you can disregard the payment completely when determining your client's financial eligibility. For more information refer to 106 CMR 363.130(D).

**NOTE:** In the TAFDC Program, this one-time severance payment is considered nonrecurring lump sum income. For more information on how to proceed with these TAFDC cases, refer to 106 CMR 204.240

**Q.** My SNAP client reported that he lost his job and will begin receiving a series of severance payments over the course of the next six months. Are these payments counted?

**A.** Yes. A series of severance payments is considered countable unearned income for SNAP purposes. For more information on countable unearned income in SNAP, refer to 106 CMR 363.220.

**NOTE:** The same is true in the TAFDC Program. A series of severance payments is considered countable unearned income. For more information on countable unearned income in the TAFDC Program, refer to 106 CMR 204.210.

**Q.** According to Field Operations Memo 2009-18: *The Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) on SNAP, TAFDC, EAEDC and EA*, when using the Unemployment Insurance Information Inquiry screen, I should be adding the \$25 ARRA amount to my client's Weekly Pay Rate before entering the amount on BEACON. Is this still the case?

**A.** Yes. At this time, the \$25 ARRA amount must be added at application, reapplication, reevaluation or recertification, until the client's benefits have ended. Unemployment compensation is countable unearned income in TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP.

**NOTE:** A \$25 weekly "dependency allowance" is disbursed, per dependent, by the Division of Unemployment Assistance to those clients responsible for the support of their child(ren). This is an allowance that some of your clients may also be receiving; it does not change the procedures outlined in Field Operations Memo 2009-18.

For more information on Unemployment benefits, see 106 CMR 204.210(B) in TAFDC, 106 CMR 321.210(B) in EAEDC and 106 CMR 363.220(B) in SNAP.

## Field Operations Memos

### **Nurse Practitioner Added to the Definition of Competent Medical Authorities: A Clarification**

TAFDC, EAEDC

Field Operations Memo 2009-6 A

Field Operations Memo 2009-6 informed TAO staff that, effective February 6, 2009, any form requiring the signature of a competent medical authority can be completed and signed by a nurse practitioner. The title of Nurse Practitioner also includes the following titles: Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurse (MS APRN) or a Psychiatric Nurse Mental Health Clinical Specialist.

### **Non-ESP Funded Activities and Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) Vocational Education Programs Referrals**

TAFDC

Field Operations Memo 2009-35 A

This memo reminds TAO staff that clients must continue to be referred to non-CIES procurement related activities to assist them in meeting the work program requirement during the month of July. Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) continues to offer non-ESP-funded programs in Dudley Square, Newmarket Square and Revere.

### **Fraud Hotline Procedures**

All

Field Operations Memo 2009-40

Currently, designated staff at the Fraud Hotline in the Fraud Investigations and Data Matching Unit (FIDMU) at Central Office receive and respond to all calls placed to the Fraud Hotline. They respond to each call by comparing information received with information entered in BEACON. This memo explains the amended procedures FIDMU staff and case managers use to process Fraud Hotline complaints. These procedures have been developed for consistency, and are designed to ensure that information sent to and from the TAO is timely, accurate and, to the degree possible, verified.

#### **Diversity Quote**

**“All progress is precarious, and the solution of one problem brings us face to face with another problem.”**

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

## Field Operations Memos

### Transfer of Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) Clients to the Malden Centralized SSI Office

SSI

Field Operations Memo 2009-42

In May, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind transferred case management of their SSI cases to the Malden Centralized SSI Office. This memo informs TAO staff of this transfer and informs them that clients who access a TAO must have their requests processed the same as any other client serviced by the Malden Centralized SSI Office.

### Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Agreement Client Survey

TAFDC

Field Operations Memo 2009-43

This memo informs TAO staff that DTA is conducting an Employment Services Program (ESP) Participant Survey which is the result of a settlement with the Office for Civil Rights (*Ramos* settlement). A sample of 7500 ESP participants received the survey which includes a stamped return envelope addressed to the Research and Policy Unit in Central Office.

The purpose of the survey is to:

- ensure ESP providers are making appropriate accommodations for clients with disabilities;
- find out if ESP participants feel their education, training and job preparation needs are met by ESP providers; and
- monitor service delivery, which will provide a baseline as we procure new employment services under the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES).

### Disability Evaluation Services (DES) Psychological Consultative Examinations (CEs) in TAOs

TAFDC and EAEDC

Field Operations Memo 2009-44

DTA and the Disability Evaluation Services (DES) have arranged with certain DES network doctors to conduct psychological examinations (CEs) in TAOs for clients who claim a mental health disability and for whom a CE appointment in the TAO is more convenient than travel to the doctor's office or medical facility. Beginning in August 2009, this service will be available in the Springfield Liberty TAO. The service will be available in the Dudley Square TAO, beginning in September 2009. This memo informs TAO staff about this new service and describes procedures to facilitate the service.

## Field Operations Memos

### Federal Minimum Wage Increase

SNAP

Field Operations Memo 2009-46

As of July 24, 2009 the federal minimum wage increased to \$7.25. This memo serves to explain the effect of this increase on SNAP E&T policy.

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### State Letter

#### The Change in Name from the Food Stamp Program to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP

State Letter 1353

The federal Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 changed the name of the Food Stamp Program to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Food stamp regulations have been revised to reflect the new program name. All chapters (106 CMR 360 through 367) are being reissued electronically online using the name SNAP. Also included are several technical changes in department terminology made for clarity and readability as follows:

1. The name of Food Stamp Program has been changed to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.
2. References to the *Food Stamp Act of 1977* have been changed to the *Food Stamp Act and its amendments*.
3. The term *Food and Consumer Services (FCS)* has been changed to *Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)*.
4. The department term *assistance unit* has been changed to *household*.
5. The department term *assistance unit manager* has been changed to *case manager*.
6. The department term *welfare office* has been changed to *local office*.

The header of each regulation page has been changed to include a field "Prev.S.L." which will identify the previous state letter that issued that page.

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### From the Forms File

The following SNAP poster "*Your SNAP Benefits Are Going Up!*" must be removed from TAO waiting areas immediately and replace with the SNAP poster "*The Food Stamp Program is Now Called SNAP.*"

## FYIs

### Changes to DTA Online

This month, the following changes have been made to **DTA Online**:

- The Pittsfield TAO's new address is now accessible through the **Field Operations** tab;
- Updates to reflect the name and functional changes in our Department's Policy, Program and External Relations Division are accessible through the **Policy, Program and External Relations** tab;
- The "Memo from Commissioner Kehoe: FY10 Budget Update" has been added to the **Latest News/ Photo Gallery** side-bar option;
- Emergency Assistance "Online Forms" and "Online Guides" have been removed from the **Policy Online** side-bar option; and
- The "Training or In-Office Support Request Form" and a "PACE Job Aid #7" have been added and both are accessible through the **Training** side-bar option.

### Changes to the EOHHS mass.gov DTA Homepage

Changes to the EOHHS mass.gov DTA Homepage include:

- Updates to "DTA Facts and Figures" as well as updates to our caseload information which can be accessed by selecting the appropriate Department program (EAEDC, FS, Homeless, SSI, TAFDC) beneath the **Research & Statistics** side-bar option;
- Appropriate changes to remove Emergency Assistance Program (EA) references and to reflect the migration of the program to the Department of Housing and Community Development;
- The elimination of SNAP Outreach Center addresses in Falmouth, Martha's Vineyard and Orleans;
- The addition of a "CIES Bidders Selected for Engagement" link which can be accessed from the **News & Updates** side-bar option;
- Updates to reflect the name and functional changes in our Department's Policy, Program and External Relations Division which can be accessed by selecting the **About the Department of Transitional Assistance** option at the bottom of the Homepage; and
- The Pittsfield TAO's new location which can be accessed by selecting "Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs)" from the **About the Department of Transitional Assistance** option at the bottom of the Homepage.



## Do You Know?

Massachusetts Farmers' Market week begins on August 16<sup>th</sup>. Farmers' Markets are outdoor markets where local farmers sell their produce directly to the consumer. Since SNAP is first and foremost a nutrition program, it is beneficial for our clients to purchase a healthy supply of fresh fruits and vegetables from these markets. Below is a listing of **Farmers' Markets in your area that are EBT-equipped to accept SNAP benefits**. Use this listing for informational purposes and pass the details along to any interested clients. Because this information is subject to change, go to [http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/farmers\\_markets.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/farmers_markets.htm) for the latest information.

### Berkshire County

City/Town	Day/Time	Location
Great Barrington	Wednesday, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	94 West Avenue
North Adams	Saturday, 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	St. Anthony Municipal Parking Lot, corner of Marshall and Center Streets

### Bristol County

City/Town	Day/Time	Location
New Bedford/Clasky Common	Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Pleasant Street between Pearl and Pope Streets

### Essex County

City/Town	Day/Time	Location
Gloucester	Thursday, 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Harbor Loop, off Roger Street (Rt. 127) Downtown
Lawrence	Wednesday, 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	Appleton Way next to City Hall
Lynn	Thursday, 11:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.	Exchange and Washington Sts, Downtown

(Continued on page 10)

**Do You Know?** *(Continued from page 9)***Hampden County**

<b>City/Town</b>	<b>Day/Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Chicopee	Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Off Chicopee Street, under I-391 Overpass
Holyoke	Thursday, 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.	High Street, between Suffolk Street and City Hall
Springfield/Indian Orchard	Friday, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Hampden Bank, 187 Main Street
Springfield/Mason Square	Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Mason Square Health Center, 11 Wilbraham Rd
Wilbraham	Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Hampden Bank, Boston Road

**Middlesex County**

<b>City/Town</b>	<b>Day/Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cambridge/Harvard University	Tuesday, 12:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Harvard University near Sanders Theater, Corner of Oxford and Kirkland Street
Lowell	Friday, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	City Hall Plaza, Arcane Drive

*(Continued on page 11)*

**Do You Know?** *(Continued from page 10)***Suffolk County**

City/Town	Day/Time	Location
Allston	Friday, 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Parking lot at intersection of North Harvard Street and Western Ave.
Boston Medical Center	Friday, 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Inside the Menino Pavillion
Dorchester/Bowdoin Square	Thursday, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Bowdoin Street Health Center, Bowdoin Street
Dorchester/Codman Square	Thursday, 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Codman Square Health Center, 637 Washington Street
Dorchester/Dorchester House	Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Dorchester House, 1353 Dorchester Ave.
Dorchester/Peabody Square	Friday, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Peabody Odwin Learning Center, 1963 Dorchester Ave.
East Boston	Thursday, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Central Square at Meridian, Bennington and Border Street
Jamaica Plain/Community Servings	Sunday, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Community Servings, 18 Marbury Terrace
Mattapan	Saturday, 10:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m.	Church of the Holy Spirit, 525 River Street
Mission Hill	Thursday, 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Brigham Circle, Intersection of Huntington Ave. and Tremont St.
Roslindale	Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Adams Park, Intersection of Washington Street and Cummins Highway
Roxbury/Dudley Town Common	Tuesday and Thursday, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Dudley Town Common, Dudley St. and Blue Hill Ave.
South Boston	Monday, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Parking Lot, West Broadway by Mt. Washington Bank

*(Continued on page 12)*

**Do You Know?** *(Continued from page 11)***Worcester County**

Town	Day/Time	Location
Fitchburg/Burbank Hospital	Monday, Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Health Alliance Hospital, Burbank Campus
Fitchburg/Riverfront Park	Thursday, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Riverfront Park, 40 Commercial Street
Worcester/Main South	Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	807 Main Street
Worcester/Northeast Side	Thursday, 12:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Salem Covenant Church, 215 East Mountain Street
Worcester/Westside	Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9:30 a. m. - 2:00 p.m.	Westside at 306 Chandler St., Beaver Brook Park Parking Lot

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## TAO Meeting Notes