



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2000-1
January 1, 2000

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  **Joyce Sampson, Assistance Commissioner for Field Operations**

Re: Year 2000 (Y2K) Business Continuity Plans

Background

During the Y2K transition, the mission-critical core function of the Department is to ensure that benefits are delivered to eligible recipients. The Department has invested a tremendous amount of time and effort programming and testing the Department's various computer systems to ensure that they are Y2K compliant for a smooth transition into the new millennium.

The Department does not anticipate any problems. However, because we interface with many other agencies, companies, and utilities, the Department's ability to conduct business as usual could be impacted. The Department has developed a series of Business Continuity and Contingency Plans that will allow us to continue issuing benefits should there be a failure of either our own systems or any of those with which we interface.

Directors will receive a more detailed memo describing the Business Continuity and Contingency Plans. If a Y2K problem is identified on January 1, 2000, Directors will receive instructions as to what plans are to be implemented.

Cyclical Issuance of Benefits

The following Business Continuity Plans may be implemented for **cyclical issuance** of benefits if there is a Y2K-related problem.

- If there is a problem with any one of the systems that make up benefit issuance, the Systems Division will determine which systems can continue to calculate and issue benefits without interruption to

**Cyclical Issuance
of Benefits (cont.)**

the recipients. Example: If PACES is not functioning, cyclical benefits can be issued via the other systems, i.e., FMCS.

- If there is a problem which prevents the Department's systems from issuing benefits, the Department will use back-up tapes.

The back-up tapes will capture the cyclical benefit levels for all recipients who are active as of the close of business on December 27, 1999. This will enable the Department to deliver benefits, based on the December 27, 1999 information, to those recipients who are active when the back-up tapes are produced. Recipients added to the system after December 27, 1999 will not be captured on the back-up tapes. Increases in benefits that are effective after December 27, 1999 and pending decreases will not be captured on the tapes and therefore will not take effect until the next cyclical date when the Department is again able to conduct business as usual.

- If Fleet Bank (direct deposit contractor) is not functioning, TAFDC and EAEDC direct deposit recipients will have their cash benefits converted to either EBT or checks.
 - If Deluxe Payment Systems (EBT contractor) is not functioning, TAFDC and EAEDC recipients will have their cash benefits converted to checks. Food stamp benefits will be converted to checks.
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**Manual Issuance
of Benefits**

In the highly unlikely event that there is a major Y2K problem in which the Department's systems are not fully operational, and the back-up tapes are used to issue benefits, the Department may determine it is also necessary to manually issue limited benefits to certain groups of people. This includes applicants who were not on the system or who were on the system with Action Reason 03, but were not approved for benefits as of December 27, 1999 when the back-up tapes were produced.

CENTRAL OFFICE WILL NOTIFY DIRECTORS IF A PLAN IS TO BE IMPLEMENTED. DO NOT TAKE ANY ACTION OR IMPLEMENT ANY CONTINGENCY PLAN UNLESS YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478.
