



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Operations Memo 2011-1
January 20, 2011

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From:  Stephanie Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Re: Medex Premium Rate Changes and Medicare Changes

Overview

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Massachusetts has announced Medex premium rate changes for the following non-group plans: Bronze, Core, Gold, Silver, Standard, Basic, Core Plus, Basic No Rx and Core Plus No Rx.

These changes were effective on January 1, 2011.

This memo:

- identifies the non-group plans that have changed and the corresponding rate changes;
- provides information on updates to SNAP benefits and the Medex premium amounts; and
- gives information about the 2011 Medex Premium Rate Change Report.

Note: While there is no SSA COLA this year, the Medicare Part B Premium will change for certain people. The Medicare Part D Deductible will not be adjusted with the Medex Premium Rate change.

**Medex Rate
Changes**

Plan	New Monthly Premium
BRONZE	\$181.76
CORE	\$ 95.69
GOLD	\$673.10
SILVER	\$493.67
STANDARD	\$485.36
BASIC	\$369.05
CORE PLUS	\$156.02
BASIC NO RX	\$183.94
CORE PLUS NO RX	\$125.68

**Rate Changes
on BEACON**

BEACON will be updated to impact February SNAP benefits with the new Medex premium amounts for participating households as follows:

- the new SNAP benefit amounts will be displayed on the Results tab for non-pended transactions and on Interview Wrapup with a status of Pending Release for pended transactions;
- the new Medex premium amount will be displayed on the Health Insurance page, Policy tab.

Updated households affected by Medex will receive a BEACON-generated notice informing them of a change to their February SNAP benefits.

**2011 Medex
Premium
Rate Change
Report**

An electronic copy of the 2011 Medex Premium Rate Change Report will be e-mailed to TAOs during the week of January 18, 2011. The report will identify all cases updated and will include the following data elements:

- TAO Name;
- Case Manager (Last and First);
- Client Name (Last and First);
- Client SSN;
- Insurance Benefit Type;
- Monthly Premium Amount;
- Benefit Amount; and
- Previous Benefit Amount.

The report is for informational purposes. No case manager action is required.

**Identifying
Clients Enrolled
in Medex**

When processing applications and recertifications, case managers are reminded of the importance of identifying clients enrolled in Medex. Proper coding ensures that the household receives the correct benefit amount and that the Medex amount will be properly updated automatically each year. To ensure accuracy and the correct calculation of SNAP benefits, Medex premium payments must be entered on the Health Insurance page, Policy tab, Insurer: Blue Cross. The case manager must make sure to select the correct Benefit Type from the dropdown list on the Benefits tab.

Please refer to *A User's Guide: Transitional Assistance Programs and BEACON*, Chapter XIV- J for procedures to update any incorrect information.

Medicare Part D Medicare Part D has three levels of participation:

- Standard;
- Partial Extra Help; and
- Full Extra Help

The overwhelming majority of SNAP- eligible participants qualify for either Partial Extra Help or Full Extra Help due to low income and assets. Therefore, some SNAP- eligible participants will continue to pay no premium or deductible, while others will pay a low premium and a low deductible.

The Standard Deductible for Medicare Part D remains at \$310 and the Partial Extra Help remains at \$62. When case managers are reviewing client cases with a standard deductible for Medicare Part D, they must request proof of the Medicare Part D and the Partial Extra Help following established procedures. Once proof is received, these amounts must be entered manually by the case manager. The premium portion of Medicare Part D must be entered on the Health Insurance page under Premium. The case manager will then be prompted to go to the Medical Expenses page to enter co-pays and/or deductible, if applicable.

Note: The Full Extra Help deductible remains at \$0.

**Medicare Part B
Changes**

The base Medicare Part B Premium has been changed to \$115.40 as of January 1, 2011 for the following clients:

- State Medicare Buy-ins;
- Newly approved RSDI clients;
- “Direct Bills” (premium is not deducted from RSDI benefits); and
- Other clients who have changes reported to SSA after January 1 that allows SSA to increase the premium.

No case manager action is needed to adjust the premium rates. However, case managers should know that varying amounts of Medicare Part B Premiums will range from \$96.50 to \$115.40. Any new clients who are eligible for Medicare Part B Premiums must be asked how much they are paying to ensure the correct amount is entered.

Questions

If you have any questions please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

Systems questions should be directed to the EOHHS Customer Service Center.
