



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Transitional Assistance*


DEVAL L. PATRICK  
Governor

JOHN W. POLANOWICZ  
Secretary

STACEY MONAHAN  
Commissioner

**Operations Memo 2014-2  
January 16, 2014**

**To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff**

**From:  Lydia Conley, Acting Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations**

**Re: 2014 Social Security/SSI Benefit Adjustment for TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP**

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**Overview**

Effective January 2014, Social Security benefits and federal SSI payments increased by 1.5 percent. This is sometimes called a Cost of Living Adjustment or COLA. The base level Medicare Part B Premium remains at \$104.90. The Medicare Part B Penalty Premium is identified in the 2014 Medicare Part B Surcharge Premiums chart on page 5 of this memo.

This Operations Memo:

- explains how BEACON will update clients with the 2014 Social Security/SSI benefit adjustment amounts and recalculate eligibility for the active cases containing the updated clients;
  - explains which cases listed on the Clients With RSDI and/or SSI view require case manager action; and
  - transmits procedures for case managers to update cases with discrepant 2014 Social Security/SS benefit adjustment amounts.
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**BEACON  
Actions**

The January Social Security/SSI amounts on BEACON are automatically processed through the following methods:

1. BEACON updates Social Security/SSI amounts on all active, pending, ineligible, denied and closed clients (who have closed during 2013) in TAFDC, EAEDC, PA and NPA SNAP cases with Social Security or SSI income and Medicare Part B premiums (including the surcharge premium, where applicable) over the weekend of January 25, 2014.
  - BEACON recalculates eligibility for all active and ineligible clients in active TAFDC, EAEDC, PA and NPA SNAP cases with Social Security or SSI income, and Medicare Part B Premiums (including the Surcharge Premium, where applicable) over the weekend of January 25, 2014.
2. The “Verified With” value of “Electronically validated by SSA/SDX or BENDEX” will be added for all successful updates. The updated amount is displayed on the Income tab of the Other Income Status page. BEACON will update the date of death on the Assessed Person page and disability information on the Disability page for TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP cases.
  - *For Discrepant Social Security Amounts:* If the Social Security amount displayed on the Income tab of the Other Income Status page was greater than the BENDEX amount or the BENDEX amount was not available from the SSA transmitted file, the batch job multiplied the current Social Security amount on BEACON by 1.5 percent and the “Verified With” value of “Calculated by BEACON COLA” was added.
  - *For Discrepant SSI Amounts:* If the SSI amount displayed on the Income tab of the Other Income Status page was greater than the SDX amount or the SDX amount was not available, **the current amount on BEACON was not updated.**

For all active cases with active or ineligible clients, an EBC Results Request is created with the Pend Period waived. These requests are released immediately. This update may result in adjusted February SNAP benefits, a grant change, or case closing effective for the first benefit cycle in February.

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**BEACON  
Actions  
(continued)**

Streamweaver notices will be sent. These notices can be viewed on the Document History tab.

**Notes:**

- SSI and RSDI changes for clients in cases whose grantee's SSN ends in 0-9 will appear on the Interview Wrapup Selection page between January 28, 2014 and February 11, 2014. Do not select the changed SSI/RSDI amount if the intended effective date of the benefit change is prior to the February issuance.
- Due to the volume of cases in the Malden Centralized SSI office, an Actuate report will be created listing all updated cases.

After the benefit adjustment updates these cases can be viewed in the Daily Priority Actions, Documents History page.

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**Clients With  
RSDI and/or SSI  
View**

The Clients with RSDI and/or SSI view identifies all active cases with an inactive or ineligible client who receives Social Security and/or SSI income. The sorting function of this view enables the user to determine which clients:

- were updated by the benefit adjustment process;
- have RSDI/SSI amounts that were recalculated by BEACON; and
- have RSDI/SSI amounts that were not updated.

**Important:** For all cases identified on the Clients with RSDI and/or SSI view with a date of January 18, 2014 or earlier, the Entered field displays discrepant SSI data and requires case manager follow-up.

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**Situations  
Requiring Case  
Manager Actions**

Case managers must use the Clients with RSDI and/or SSI view to identify clients with discrepant Social Security and/or SSI data that requires case manager follow-up.

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**Situations  
Requiring Case  
Manager Actions  
(continued)**

Case managers must:

- sort the clients by Entered date on the view by clicking on Entered;
  - ✓ all clients whose Type is RSDI (Social Security), and whose “Verified With” is “Calculated by BEACON COLA” must be reviewed by the case manager;
  - ✓ all clients whose Type is SSI and whose Entered date is January 18, 2014 or earlier must be reviewed by the case manager;
- compare the Social Security and/or SSI amount(s) on BEACON with the appropriate BENDEX (Social Security) or SDX (SSI) Inquiry screens on the FMCS BA option of the Mainframe (available on and after January 25th);
- if the BENDEX amount and the BEACON amount differ, access the SVES online individual inquiry system to verify the most updated Social Security amount which appears on the S screen of the BA option of the Mainframe. Refer to the [Systems User’s Guide, Volume 5: Subsystems, Chapter VI](#) for more information;
- enter the correct information from the BA option of the Mainframe on the Income tab of the Other Income Status page on BEACON; and
- complete the Interview Wrapup section.

**Note:** When entering Social Security/SSI income, be sure to select the appropriate client from the Member List to safeguard against future discrepancies.

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**Medicare Part B  
Changes**

The base Medicare Part B Premium remains at \$104.90 as of January 1, 2014. No case manager action is needed to adjust the premium rates.

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**Medicare Part B  
Surcharge  
Premium**

The Medicare Part B Premium surcharges are adjusted, as shown in the table below.

**2014 Medicare Part B Surcharge Premiums  
[Base Premium of \$104.90 Plus Surcharge]**

10%	\$115.39	180%	\$293.72
20%	\$125.88	190%	\$304.21
30%	\$136.37	200%	\$314.70
40%	\$146.86	210%	\$325.19
50%	\$157.35	220%	\$335.68
60%	\$167.84	230%	\$346.17
70%	\$178.33	240%	\$363.46
80%	\$188.82	250%	\$367.15
90%	\$199.31	260%	\$377.64
100%	\$209.80	270%	\$388.13
110%	\$220.29	280%	\$398.62
120%	\$230.78	290%	\$409.11
130%	\$241.27	300%	\$419.60
140%	\$251.76	310%	\$430.09
150%	\$262.25	320%	\$440.58
160%	\$272.74	330%	\$451.07
170%	\$283.23	340%	\$461.56

**Medicare Part D  
Deductible**

Medicare Part D has three levels of participation:

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

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

**Medicare Part D  
Deductible  
(continued)**

The Standard Deductible for Medicare Part D decreases from \$325 to \$310 and the Partial Extra Help remains at \$66. 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 on a BEACON-generated Verification Checklist, giving the client ten days to provide the verification. 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.

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**Impact of  
SSA Benefit  
Adjustment on  
SNAP  
Benefits**

Recalculation results indicate that many SNAP households will be negatively impacted by the benefit adjustment. The decrease in SNAP benefits for these households was caused by the increase in the SSA amount. The SSA benefit adjustment recalculation will impact SNAP benefits for February.

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**SSA Benefit  
Adjustment  
Streamweaver  
Notices**

To address specific populations that may be impacted by the SSA benefit adjustment, five benefit adjustment Streamweaver notices have been developed:

- Attachment A will be mailed to SNAP-only cases (excluding CAP cases) explaining that the client's SNAP benefits are changing because of the benefit adjustment increase and any other change in circumstance.
- Attachment B will be mailed to CAP cases explaining that the client's Food Assistance benefits are changing because of the benefit adjustment increase and any other change in circumstance.
- Attachment C will be mailed to cash and SNAP combo cases explaining that the client's cash and/or SNAP benefits are changing because of the benefit adjustment increase and any other change in circumstance.
- Attachment D will be mailed to EAEDC rest home cases explaining that the client's EAEDC benefits are changing because of the benefit adjustment increase and any other change in circumstance.
- Attachment E will be mailed to cash-only cases explaining that the client's cash benefits are changing because of the benefit adjustment increase and any other change in circumstance.

Each Streamweaver notice will also contain information about how to access My Account Page and the automated hotline to access information about their case. The notice will also include the Recipient Services phone number for clients to call if they have any questions. These notices will appear in the Document Index.

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**Questions**

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

Systems questions should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.

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P. O. BOX 129562 CAN 999  
Boston, MA 02112  
SSA-COLA 2014

Important Notice - Read Carefully  
**Este Mensaje Es Importante – Lea Cuidadosamente**

**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance**

Mary Jones  
101 Main Street  
Framingham, MA 01702

Agency ID: 999999  
Framingham TAO - DTA

01/26/2014

**SNAP Only SSA COLA Notice**

Dear Mary Jones:

In January 2014, your Social Security went up. Social Security (RSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly benefits went up by 1.5%. Because of this increase, we must recalculate your SNAP benefits beginning February 2014.

In February 2014, your SNAP benefits will go from \$220.00 to \$202.00. This is because of a change in your income from RSDI or SSI benefits and any other changes in your case that we know about.

It is very important that you tell us about all changes in your income, expenses and household circumstances. For example:

- **MEDICAL EXPENSES:** If you are disabled or age 60 or over you may be able to get more SNAP benefits if you spend more than \$35 per month in health care costs that are not covered by insurance like:
  - co-pays for medicines, or if you pay for over-the-counter drugs, health supplies, or transportation to see your doctor.
  - if you have changes in medical expenses please send proof of these changes to your case manager. Examples of proofs are pharmacy receipts or taxi or bus receipts for trips to the pharmacy or doctors' appointments.

**Please tell your case manager if you have monthly medical expenses over \$35.**

- **HOUSING EXPENSE:** If you live in public or subsidized housing your rent may go up because of the increase in your income.
  - if you have a change in rent please send proof of the change to your case manager. Examples of proof are a letter or lease from the housing authority about the increase.



**Please tell your case manager if your rent goes up.**

Information about your case is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please call our automated hotline at 1-877-382-2363 or sign up for My Account Page to see your case information online at: [www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice](http://www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice).

If you disagree with the amount of your SNAP benefits, you have the right to a fair hearing. The other side of this notice has important information about your hearing rights. To request a hearing, complete the back of this notice.

You may call 1-800-445-6604 if you are having trouble reading or understanding this notice. The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 364.500, 364.600, 366.130.

## Attachment B

Dear {CLIENT NAME}

In January 2014, your Social Security went up. Social Security (RSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly benefits went up by 1.5%. Because of this increase, we must recalculate your Food Assistance benefits beginning February 2014.

In February 2014, your Food Assistance benefits will go from {OLD\_AMOUNT} to {NEW\_AMOUNT}. This is because of a change in your income from RSDI or SSI benefits and any other changes in your case that we know about.

Information about your case is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please call our automated hotline at 1-877-382-2363 or sign up for My Account Page to see your case information online at: [www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice](http://www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice).

If you disagree with the amount of your Food Assistance benefits, you have the right to a fair hearing. The other side of this notice has important information about your hearing rights. To request a hearing, complete the back of this notice.

You may call 1-800-445-6604 if you are having trouble reading or understanding this notice.

The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 364.500, 364.600, 366.130.

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Mary Jones  
101 Main Street  
Framingham, MA 01702

Agency ID: 999999  
Framingham TAO - DTA

01/26/2014

**Cash and SNAP SSA COLA Notice**

Dear Mary Jones:

In January 2014, your Social Security went up. Social Security (RSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly benefits went up by 1.5%. Because of this increase, we must recalculate your benefits beginning February 2014.

In February 2014, your TAFDC benefits will go from \$380.00 to \$340.00 and your SNAP benefits will go from \$220.00 to \$208.00. This is because of a change in your income from RSDI and/or SSI benefits and any other changes in your case that we know about.

It is very important that you tell us about all changes in your income, expenses and household circumstances. For example:

- **MEDICAL EXPENSES:** If you are disabled or age 60 or over you may be able to get more SNAP benefits if you spend more than \$35 per month in health care costs that are not covered by insurance like:
  - co-pays for medicines, or if you pay for over-the-counter drugs, health supplies, or transportation to see your doctor.
  - if you have changes in medical expenses please send proof of these changes to your case manager. Examples of proofs are pharmacy receipts or taxi or bus receipts for trips to the pharmacy or doctors' appointments.

**Please tell your case manager if you have monthly medical expenses over \$35.**

- **HOUSING EXPENSE:** If you live in public or subsidized housing your rent may go up because of the increase in your income.
  - if you have a change in rent please send proof of the change to your case manager. Examples of proof are a letter or lease from the housing authority about the increase.

**Please tell your case manager if your rent goes up.**

Information about your case is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please call our automated hotline at 1-877-382-2363 or sign up for My Account Page to see your case information online at: [www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice](http://www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice).

If you disagree with the amount of your TAFDC or SNAP benefits, you have the right to a fair hearing. The other side of this notice has important information about your hearing rights. To request a hearing, complete the back of this notice.

You may call 1-800-445-6604 if you are having trouble reading or understanding this notice.

The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 204.210 (B), 204.220, 204.260, 204.420, 204.425, 364.500, 364.600, 366.130.

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Mary Jones  
101 Main Street  
Framingham, MA 01702

Agency ID: 999999  
Framingham TAO - DTA

01/26/2014

**Residential Facility SSA COLA Notice**

Dear Mary Smith:

In January 2014, your Social Security went up. Social Security (RSDI) monthly benefits went up by 1.5%. Because of this increase, we must recalculate your EAEDC benefits beginning February 2014.

In February 2014, your EAEDC benefits will go from \$120.00 to \$108.00. This is because of a change in your income from RSDI benefits and any other changes in your case that we know about.

Information about your case is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please call our automated hotline at 1-877-382-2363 or sign up for My Account Page to see your case information online at: [www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice](http://www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice).

If you disagree with the amount of your EAEDC benefits, you have the right to a fair hearing. The other side of this notice has important information about your hearing rights. To request a hearing, complete the back of this notice.

You may call 1-800-445-6604 if you are having trouble reading or understanding this notice.

The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 321.200 (B), 321.220, 321.410, 321.420.

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**Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance**

Mary Jones  
101 Main Street  
Framingham, MA 01702

Agency ID: 999999  
Framingham TAO - DTA  
01/26/2014

**Cash Only SSA COLA Notice**

Dear Mary Smith:

In January 2014, your Social Security went up. Social Security (RSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly benefits went up by 1.5%. Because of this increase, we must recalculate your {PROGRAM} benefits beginning February 2014.

In February 2014, your {PROGRAM} benefits will go from \$220.00 to \$208.00. This is because of a change in your income from RSDI and/or SSI benefits and any other changes in your case that we know about.

It is very important that we know about all changes in your income, expenses and household. For example:

- **HOUSING EXPENSE:** If you live in public or subsidized housing, your rent may go up because of the increase in your income.
  - if you have a change in rent, please send proof of the change to your case manager. Examples of proof are a letter or lease from the housing authority about the increase.

**Please tell your case manager if your rent goes up.**

Information about your case is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please call our automated hotline at 1-877-382-2363 or sign up for My Account Page to see your case information online at: [www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice](http://www.mass.gov/vg/selfservice).

If you disagree with the amount of your TAFDC benefits, you have the right to a fair hearing. The other side of this notice has important information about your hearing rights. To request a hearing, complete the back of this notice.

You may call 1-800-445-6604 if you are having trouble reading or understanding this notice.

The regulation(s) used in reaching these decisions are 106 CMR: 204.210 (B), 204.220, 204.260, 204.420, 204.425.