

## Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

All  
Field Operations Memo  
2003-17

This memo explains the impact of HIPAA to TAO staff.

- This federal privacy act protects patients' medical records and other health information and applies to health care providers, referred to as covered entities. DTA is not a covered entity and therefore not subject to the provisions of HIPAA.
- The TAFDC and EAEDC Disability Supplements were revised to make the Medical Records Release Form contained within the supplements HIPAA compliant. This is because the forms are used to obtain information from covered entities.



## EA Self-Sufficiency Plan Changes

EA

*EA User's Guide: Emergency Assistance, SSI Special Benefits and BEACON - Update No. 013*

This update provides instructions on the following issues:

- The importance of accurate data collection is stressed as DTA shares information with Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).
- Lump sum payment will be treated as income in the month received and an asset in the following months.
- Transfer-in EA AUs require a review, an update of information and possibly an eligibility review.
- An EA AU placed in a substance abuse treatment program will have a Self-Sufficiency Plan, Parts I and III developed.
- AU Managers, Homeless Coordinators, HAP providers and shelter providers must inquire about health conditions, mental or physical, that make it difficult for the EA AU to follow through with the specific activities on their plan for self-sufficiency.
- The following activities are required of clients to meet the Self-Sufficiency Plan (EA-Plan):
  - Cooperating with the Child Support Enforcement Unit (CSEU) of DOR, unless there is good cause. Some AUs must apply for child support services by completing the *Application and Agreement for Child Support Enforcement Services* form from DOR. The completed application must be sent to DOR.
  - Applying for all potential monetary benefits, such as RSDI, SSI, TAFDC, UC benefits, Workers' Compensation, Veterans' Benefits and retirement benefits.
  - Resolving outstanding Massachusetts defaults or warrants. The EA AU must show that it is making an effort to resolve these issues to be compliant with its SSP.
  - Meeting program requirements of TAFDC or FSP. A member of the EA AU who is also a nonexempt FS/ET AU member must be referred to Skills Training and Related Job Search activities.
  - Collecting school information which is used to update the Education windows.
- The Self-Sufficiency Plan/Agreement (EA-15) form and the Self-Sufficiency Plan (EA-Plan), Part I, Part II and Part III have been revised.