

FYI

Display of ESP and Employment Participation Hours

Effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.20, on the Monitor Participation window, BEACON will display the total number of *actual* participation hours for a given month for both exempt and nonexempt Assessed Persons (APs).

For APs with a single activity (for example, education *or* employment), BEACON will display the actual participation hours entered from the Participation and Attendance form or the Monthly Report, respectively. For APs with multiple activities (for example, education *and* employment), BEACON will total and display the actual participation hours entered from both the Participation and Attendance form and the Monthly Report.

These changes will help the AU Manager determine which hours were used to meet the Work Program requirement. It will also help the Department determine current participation rates and will allow the Department to make decisions about ways to increase work participation.

FYI

Medical Deductions

While interviewing elderly or disabled food stamp recipients, it is important to remember to ask about any non-reimbursed incurred medical expenses, even if the expenses are unpaid. Maximizing benefits for these individuals is especially important as health care costs can be prohibitive and can force an individual to make a choice between buying food or paying for medical necessities, a dilemma faced by many seniors with low incomes.

Disabled recipients are entitled to these deductions whether they are children or adults, as long as the recipient meets the disability standard set forth in policy. All expenses must be verified, and the AU Manager, if requested, must assist the recipient in obtaining verifications. The AU Manager must also accept the recipient's claim that the expense has not been reimbursed, unless questionable. AU Managers are reminded that in addition to items such as prescriptions, eyeglasses, dental care and health insurance premiums, there are many other costs that are acceptable medical expenses. These include but are not limited to:

- over-the-counter medications with approval by a licensed practitioner;
- hospitalization or nursing home costs while on food stamps;
- dentures, hearing aids and prosthetics;
- veterinarian bills and food for service animals such as Seeing Eye dogs;
- lodging and transportation costs;
- psychotherapy;
- home health aides, attendants, housekeepers or child care services required due to disability;
- medical equipment purchases or rentals;
- alternative health treatments including chiropractic services, acupuncture and massage therapy;
- co-pays for office appointments and emergency room service; and
- medical supplies such as incontinence diapers and hearing aid batteries.

See CMR 364.400 for details on medical expenses.