



# Transitions

April 2013

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Dear Colleagues,

The Department remains incredibly busy as we continue to improve client services, enhance program integrity, and make sure our resources are being used as intended.

This month, we continued our “Bridge to Stability” listening tour with stops in Lowell, Taunton, Pittsfield, Worcester, Brockton, Methuen and Salem. The turnout and participation have been amazing. In Brockton and Springfield, we had clients share their heartbreaking stories and tell us how we can help them transition from TAFDC or SNAP to economic stability. In Pittsfield, client advocates shared some great ideas on how to improve services. The [Brockton Enterprise](#), [Springfield Republican](#) and [Berkshire Eagle](#), covered the events.

At the end of March, we announced a 100 day action plan to enhance program integrity, restore public trust in its critical functions, and improve services for clients. The action plan incorporates the implementation of EBT reforms, policy and procedural changes, an increase in the provision of oversight and training, and significant investments in technological enhancements. The plan also takes proactive steps to prevent fraud and abuse, block EBT card usage at prohibited establishments and increase investigation and enforcement of SNAP trafficking. The Plan includes increased data matching, including the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Department of Revenue, Department of Corrections, Department of Secondary and Elementary Education.

In early April, we also announced a new partnership with statewide law enforcement associations to increase data sharing, while giving local police the tools they need to ensure that clients and retailers are abiding by the law. The partnership is the first of its kind for DTA. As part of the 100 day action plan, we have launched bi-weekly monitoring of ATM and point of sale withdrawals to identify any purchases made at prohibited establishments. Staff members are monitoring where transactions are located and visiting potentially prohibited establishments, such as stores that sell liquor. Under the new agreement, the Department will share this data with local law enforcement so they can investigate and prevent the sale of prohibited items and the use of EBT cards at prohibited establishments.

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# From the Commissioner *(Continued from Page 1)*

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As part of the partnership, we are also working in collaboration with the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, Massachusetts Major City Chiefs Association, and other law enforcement in cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth on trainings on the EBT restrictions signed into law by Governor Deval Patrick last year.

Finally, as you all know, Boston and the entire Commonwealth suffered an unthinkable and incredibly tragic event on Patriots Day that took the lives of three people and injured more than 200. I ask that you keep the families of the victims in your thoughts. I also want to take the time to thank our first responders, the National Guard, medical personnel, and those volunteers who ran towards the chaos to help those injured.

Please feel free to contact me at any time by calling 617-348-8400 or by emailing [Stacey.Monahan@state.ma.us](mailto:Stacey.Monahan@state.ma.us).

Sincerely,



Stacey Monahan  
Interim Commissioner

## Quality Corner

This month we will review two SNAP errors. The first was caused by the termination of dependent care expenses while the second was caused by an invalid closing.

### **Information Reported at Recertification Not Used in Calculation of SNAP**

This NPA SNAP household included the client and three children ages 12, 10 and 8. The case was certified as Annual Reporting from September 13, 2012 to September 12, 2013. At recertification, the client reported she was working and receiving a total of \$2535 in gross earnings; she was paying a monthly mortgage of \$1986 and monthly home insurance of \$79 and was responsible for heating and cooling expenses. She did not report expenses for dependent care on her recertification form.

Quality Control (QC) determined that at recertification the case manager did not remove the prior dependent care cost of \$75 per month for each child on the Dependent Care Expenses page on BEACON. This resulted in the client continuing to get a dependent care deduction of \$225 in the SNAP calculation. This caused an overissuance error of \$67 for the review month.

### **What's a Case Manager to Do?**

Case managers must carefully review the recertification form to record and process any change in reported information. After wrapping up a case in BEACON, case managers should check the Financial Results tab to view the income and expenses being used in the SNAP benefit calculation. This practice allows the case manager to identify any incorrect entries and amend them before the transaction is released. For more tips on preventing errors, see *Keys to Preventing Errors* outlined in Quality Corner of February, 2008.

### **Invalid Closing – Negative Error**

This NPA SNAP household was a 23-year-old homeless client who had no income. The case was certified as Annual Reporting with a certification period from May 11, 2012 to May 10, 2013. An Interim Report was sent to the client on September 26, 2012 and was to be returned by October 11, 2012. The report was returned by the client prior to the return-by date. The Interim Report was initiated in the Reevaluation page of BEACON. A *Thank You for Returning the Interim Report* notice was issued to the client on October 11, 2012. On the Interim Report, the client had reported a change in address, shelter, utility expenses and earnings from a new job. The SNAP case closed on November 2, 2012 for failure to complete an Interim Report. Quality Control (QC) determined that this was an invalid closing and negative error, because the client had in fact returned the Interim Report on time; however, the case manager did not issue a verification checklist to request the required verifications.

### **What's a Case Manager to Do?**

A verification checklist should have been issued to the client requesting verification of residency and of the new earnings. There was sufficient time to do this and process the Interim Report before the release date to close the case.

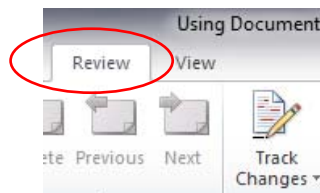
There are several views and reports available to assist case managers and supervisors in prioritizing recertifications and Interim Reports. The most comprehensive is the *Reevaluation Status Detail Report* available in Actuate. For more information on prioritizing SNAP recertifications and processing Interim Reports, see Operations Memo 2011-43 and Operations Memo 2011-8A.

## Training Corner

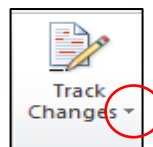
### Track Changes – Using Balloons

When reviewing a document in Word that has been returned to you with changes made via Track Changes, it can be difficult to read when there are extensive edits by users whose word processing application does not default to using the “balloon” option). The resulting crossed-out words and sentences take up extra space, resulting in the formatting of the document being altered. Follow the steps below to have deleted or replaced words not take up extra space in the document:

1. Click **Review**.

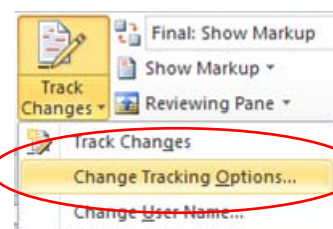


2. Click the **Track Changes** drop down arrow.



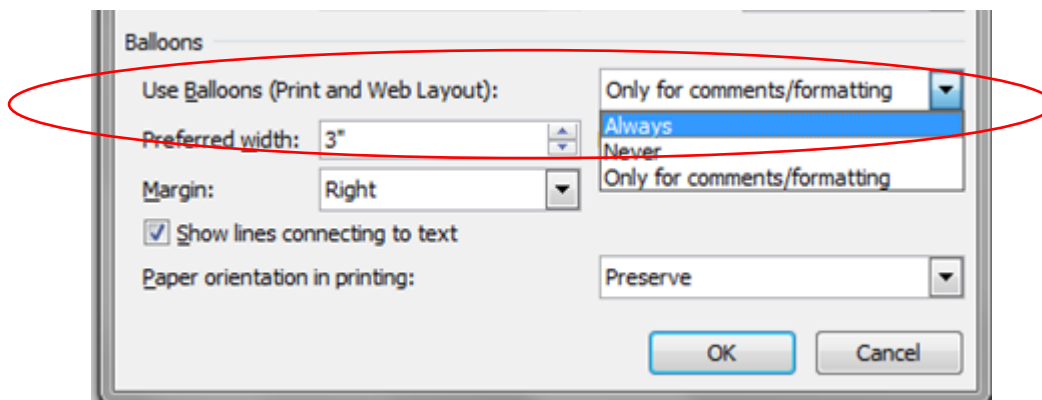
3. Click **Change Tracking Options...**

*Result: the Track Changes Options popup window opens.*



4. Scroll to the bottom of the **Track Changes Options** window and in the **Use Ballons (Print and Web layout)** field select **Always**. Click **OK**.

*Result: Balloons in the margins of the document will replace crossed-out words whenever text is edited (see next page for an example).*



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## Training Corner *(Continued from Page 4)*

### Comparing Balloons vs. Crossed-out Text

1. Reading sentences that mix the original crossed-out words with the new words can be confusing.

You can easily change the formatting of ~~selected text in the document text~~ ~~document text that you select~~ by ~~choosing a look~~ ~~selecting a style~~ for the ~~selected-highlighted~~ text from the Quick Styles gallery on the Home tab. You can also format text directly by using the other controls on the Home tab. Most controls offer a choice of using the look from the current theme or using a format that you specify directly.

2. Reading sentences with the crossed-out words removed can be easier on the eyes. The deleted words have been moved to balloons in the margin, allowing you to read through the changed text more easily.

<p>You can easily change the formatting <del>document text that you select</del> by <del>selecting a style</del> for the <del>highlighted</del> text from the Quick Styles gallery on the Home tab. You can also format text directly by using the other controls on the Home tab. Most controls offer a choice of using the look from the current theme or using a format that you specify directly.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;"><b>Deleted:</b> of selected text in the document text</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;"><b>Deleted:</b> choosing a look</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;"><b>Deleted:</b> selected</div>
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## FYI

### Clarification of Relocation Benefit Payments

When authorizing a Relocation Benefit payment(s) to a vendor(s) on behalf of a client, case managers are reminded to only accept a “Sold To” billing invoice when the billing invoice identifies the client as the customer. The “Sold To” billing invoice verifies that the client has incurred or will incur an expense which may qualify for a relocation benefit payment. Additionally, the case manager must ensure that the billing invoice submitted reflects the vendor that is actually providing the goods or service, and not a third party, such as a Housing Consumer Education Center.

Once an acceptable billing invoice and a properly completed *Relocation Benefit Verification* form are submitted to the TAO, an Invoice for Special Services (SSPS) can be issued to the vendor.

Please see Operations Memo 2012-19 for current procedures regarding Relocation Benefit payments.

## From the Hotline

If you have any questions on this column or other policy and procedural material, please have your Hotline designee call the **Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478**.

**Q. 1.** Can a former TAFDC client continue receiving ESP child care services?

**A. 1.** Yes. A former TAFDC client may continue receiving ESP child care services after a TAFDC case has closed, but only when the former client is meeting participation standards for an ESP education or training activity that began prior to the case closing. For more information on ESP education and training activities, refer to 106 CMR 207.140.

**Q. 2.** How long can a former TAFDC client continue receiving ESP child care services?

**A. 2.** The child care referral end date for former TAFDC clients receiving ESP child care services must not:

- exceed the completion date of the education or training activity, or
- last longer than six months beyond the TAFDC case closing date.

Use whichever date is earlier. For more information on ESP child care services for former TAFDC clients who are actively engaged in an education or training activity, refer to 106 CMR 207.210(A).

**Q. 3.** If a former TAFDC client is not completing an ESP education or training activity, can they still receive ESP child care services?

**A. 3.** No. However, a former TAFDC client whose case closed within 12 months and who is working may be given a Transitional Child Care referral.

**Q. 4.** My TAFDC client's case is closing and she is no longer participating in an ESP education or training activity. What should I tell this TAFDC client about available child care services?

**A. 4.** Explain to her that as a former client, once she begins working she may qualify for a Transitional Child Care referral if the request is made within the 12-month period following the TAFDC closing date.

**Important:** Remember that even if there happen to be additional months remaining on a client's ESP Child Care referral, the ESP Child Care referral must be terminated before a Transitional Child Care referral can be completed for a former client because former TAFDC clients who are working are not allowed to continue receiving ESP child care. To ensure that former TAFDC clients do not continue receiving ESP child care after a TAFDC case closure, remember to regularly check the Closed/Denied Within the Last Two Months and the Child Care AUs by Client Name views in BEACON for up-to-date information on recently closed TAFDC cases and active child care cases.

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**From the Hotline** *(Continued from Page 6)*

- Q. 5.** How long can a former TAFDC client who is employed receive Transitional Child Care services?
- A. 5.** Transitional Child Care services for former TAFDC clients is limited to no more than 12 consecutive months from the TAFDC case closing date, while the former client is actively employed.
- Q. 6.** My client's case is closing because her earnings are above TAFDC income standards. She had been working while receiving TAFDC payments and still has three months left on her ESP child care referral. At the same time, she has three months remaining on an education activity that she has been actively participating in. Can I wait until this ESP child care referral expires before completing a new Transitional Child Care referral?
- A. 6.** No. Even though this client is engaged in an educational activity, once the TAFDC case with earnings closes, the ESP child care services must also be terminated. If this former client intends to continue working, a Transitional Child Care referral **must** be completed immediately following the ESP child care termination so that the former client remains eligible to receive the full 12 months of Transitional Child Care services. For more information on Transitional Child Care services, refer to 106 CMR 207.210(A).
- NOTE:** Remember that the Transitional Child Care referral may also mean the start of out-of-pocket dependent care expenses for certain SNAP clients. For more information on SNAP dependent care expenses, refer to 106 CMR 364.400(D).



## Operations Memos

### **SNAP: Automation of the Day-2 Procedure for Special 30-Day Expedited Cases**

SNAP

Operations Memo 2013-12

Federal regulations require SNAP applications to be approved or denied by Day-30. Therefore, whenever a SNAP application is approved on Day-30, the benefits are issued on that day as a special 30-day expedited issuance.

Since a case approved on Day-30 is a special 30-day expedited issuance, on the day after the special 30-day expedited issuance (i.e. Day 2), the case manager is required to assign the appropriate recertification type to extend the certification period so that the household may receive regular monthly issuances. If the certification period has not been extended on Day-2, this delay may cause the case to close or a recertification form to be mailed to the household in error.

BEACON now automates the Day-2 activity for all special 30-day expedited cases. This Operations Memo advises staff of the automation of the Day-2 activity for special 30-day expedited cases.

### **Returned Mail Process - Automation of Central Office Returns**

All

Operations Memo 2013-13A

This Operations Memo further informs Department staff about a new automated process for handling Central Office returned mail from mass mailings and obsoletes Operations Memo 2013-13; *Returned Mail Processing-Automation of Central Office Returns*. A sample of the Special Projects-Returned Mail Notice (SP-RMN) that is sent to households with a forwarding address is attached to the memo.

### **SNAP TAFDC and EAEDC - Verifying Noncitizen Status: Required SAVE Documentation**

All

Operations Memo 2013-14

This Operations Memo is being issued to:

- remind TAO staff how to obtain passwords to log in to SAVE;
- remind TAO staff how to verify noncitizen status;
- provide TAO staff with updated information from USCIS regarding SAVE document selections; and
- remind TAO staff about the USCIS fact sheet clients can use to correct erroneous status information.





## Operations Memos

### The Secure Jobs Connect Program

TAFDC

Operations Memo 2013-15

This Operations Memo:

- advises TAO staff about the Secure Jobs Connect program and identifies the providers who will provide employment-related services for the program;
- identifies clients who may participate in the Secure Jobs Connect program;
- explains the pre-authorization referral process; and
- provides instructions for referring TAFDC clients to the appropriate Secure Jobs Connect program provider.

### TAFDC, EAEDC, and SNAP: Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card Fees, Replacements and Notices – Mailing to Clients

All

Operations Memo 2013-16

This Operations Memo advises TAO staff about:

- a mailing to clients explaining the EBT fee policy; and
- a poster about the EBT fee policy to be placed in every TAO waiting room.

### TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP - Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card Fees, Replacements and Notices

All

Operations Memo 2013-18

This Operations Memo informs Department staff about the:

- \$5.00 fee for SNAP and cash households that request a replacement EBT card;
- clerical staff responsibilities;
- exemption reasons and methods for collecting the fee from the household's EBT account;
- replacement fee process for client who request four or more replacement cards; and
- EBT review team responsibilities.

The Operations Memo also obsoletes Operations Memo 2012-56, *TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP - Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card Fees, Replacements and Notices*.

## Operations Memos

### Spring 2013 SNAP Heat and Eat (H-EAT) Program Update

SNAP

Operations Memo 2013-19A

DTA, in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), provides H-EAT benefits to eligible SNAP households each year. Households newly eligible for H-EAT benefits will receive a significant increase in SNAP benefit amount based on receipt of the H-EAT Fuel Assistance Program. The Operations Memo also discusses the restoration of H-EAT benefits for households who lost H-EAT benefits prematurely and the removal of the heating/cooling SUA for households that are no longer eligible for H-EAT benefits.

Operations Memo 2013-19 has been obsoleted by this memo.

### TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP: The Work Number Project

All

Operations Memo 2013-22

The purpose of this memo is to:

- explain the Work Number Real Time Look-Up Process;
- explain case managers' responsibilities in processing the employment information obtained;
- introduce the new External Agency-Earned Income Page;
- describe how and when designated staff can access The Work Number's Express Service;
- list the steps to follow to request and receive information from The Work Number Express Service;
- and,
- obsolete Operations Memo 2010-56: Access to the Work Number.



## From the Forms File

### Revised Brochures

The following brochures have been revised to inform clients about the \$5 fee for a replacement EBT card. Discard all old versions of these brochures and use the revised versions.

18-825-0413-05

18-826-0413-05(S)

EBT-TB Brochure (Rev. 4/2013)

*Electronic Benefit Transfer*

02-210-0413-05

02-213-0413-05(S)

TAFDC-PB (Rev. 4/2013)

*Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Brochure*

04-040-0413-05

04-041-0413-05(S)

EAEDC-PB (Rev. 4/2013)

*Emergency Aid to Elderly Disabled and Children Brochure*

09-169-0413-05

09-170-0413-05(S)

SNAP-PB (Rev. 4/2013)

*The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Brochure*

02-211-0413-05

02-212-0413-05- (Spanish)

02-129-0413-05- (Portuguese)

YRTK (Rev. 4/2013)

*Your Right to Know Brochure*

Other language versions of the *Your Right To Know* brochure will soon be available.

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### Diversity Quote

**“We inhabit a universe that is characterized by diversity. ”**

**Desmond Tutu**

## TAO Meeting Notes