



Transitions

August 2013

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Dear Colleagues,

This summer we made some exciting announcements and implemented strong initiatives to help improve client services and enhance program integrity. As the Commonwealth begins to turn from summer to fall, we are starting to focus more of our efforts on helping our clients eat healthier by providing better options like more fruits and vegetables and promoting community gardens and farmer's markets.

In mid-August, I met with a company called The Fresh Truck, which "is a mobile healthy food market, serving up Boston neighborhoods with fresh and affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains and other healthy food options." Their mission aligns with our goal of helping clients eat healthier at a lower cost and their ability to make numerous stops throughout Boston will allow more of our clients to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at a lower cost. In late August, the Fresh Truck received its EBT terminal and is now accepting EBT cards. We will continue to work with them and other groups and businesses working to offer healthy food options throughout the fall and winter to make their produce more available to our clients and make fresh produce more accessible.

In addition, we are working with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and the Executive Office of Elder Services to conduct a Farmer's Market Tour in Belmont, Dorchester and Westfield to promote fresh fruits and vegetables and the many programs our clients can take advantage of farmer's markets across the Commonwealth. I will make sure to keep you updated as on the dates and times of these events.

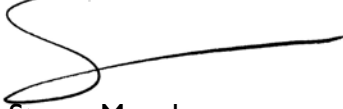
(Continued on Page 2)

Commissioner's Corner *(Continued from Page 1)*

We have a very busy and exciting fall ahead of us and you continued hard work and passion for the Department and our clients will help us be successful and reach our goals.

Thank you for all you do every day – I appreciate all your efforts.

Sincerely,



Stacey Monahan

If you have any comments or feedback, please feel free to contact me at Stacey.Monahan@state.ma.us

Quality Corner

This month we will review a SNAP error caused by the miscalculation of medical expenses.

Medical Expenses

At recertification, this NPA SNAP household included the client, her spouse and their two children. The household met the elder/disabled criteria. The SNAP benefit calculation was based on monthly earnings of \$164, RSDI benefits of \$1669 per month, shelter expenses of \$1265 per month plus the heating/cooling SUA. The client was also credited with a medical deduction of \$256. The medical expense deduction was derived from prescriptions of \$153.78 and other medical and dental costs of \$136.

The Quality Control reviewer determined that the case manager had used a prescription drug coverage sheet from the client's insurance carrier to verify the medical expenses but had incorrectly interpreted the information on the sheet. The client was allowed medical expenses of \$154 but the amount she actually incurred was \$8.

The correct medical deduction should have been \$110. The misapplication of the medical expenses caused an overissuance in the amount of \$65 for the review month.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

When determining a medical expense amount, case managers must be careful to identify the actual cost incurred by the client. In this case, the case manager should have used the amount listed on the documentation the client provided in the *Amount You Paid* column but instead used the amount listed in the *Year-to-Date for Out-of-Pocket costs* column which included the Medicare payment. A definition of out-of-pocket expenses was outlined in Section 3 of the documentation. This definition included the client's cost and the costs paid by Medicare or other organizations.

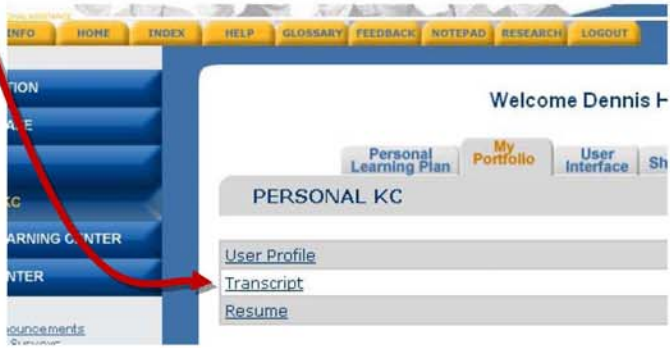
When a client reports that he or she has medical expenses, the case manager must ask the client to determine if these are medical expenses for which he or she is responsible to pay. For more information on allowable medical expense deductions, refer to *SNAP Medical Deductions Job Aid* on Policy Online.

Training Corner

Accessing Your PACE Training Transcript

The Training Unit is frequently asked by employees for confirmation that they attended a specific course. To save time, you can always access your course transcript with just a few clicks, after you log in to PACE. Here's how:

- Getting to your PACE Transcript:
1. After you log into PACE, click **Personal KC (Knowledge Center)**.
 2. Click the **My Portfolio** Tab.
 3. Click **Transcript**.



(Continued on Page 5)

Training Corner (Continued from Page 4)

Understanding Your PACE Training Transcript

- 1) Courses are listed in alphabetical order.
- 2) Type: **O** = online course **C** = classroom course
- 3) In many cases, the course name begins with three letters that indicate who sponsored the class:
 - DTA – Department of Transitional Assistance
 - CSD – Center for Staff Development
 - ETH – Ethics Commission
 - ITD – Information Technology Division
 - MRC – Mass Rehabilitation
 - HRD – Human Resources Division
 - CLD – Commonwealth Learning and Development (new courses from HRD use this identifier)
- 4) If you have taken a course more than once, only the data for the last time you took the course will be displayed. Click **View** to see information for the other classes.

Employee Search
To search for training information for a user, enter a user part of the first or last name, then click **Search**.

First Name:

Last Name: **Search**

Course Search
To search course information, enter a keyword or phrase for the course, then click **Search**.

Keywords:

All Words **Search**

Type	Course Name	Start Date	Completion Date	Status	Print	View
C	Food Stamps Refresh - Section #21 info certificate	03/02/2005	03/02/2005	Completed		View
O	HRD Diversity Part II Disability Awareness (All Employees) info certificate	10/19/2011	04/02/2013	Complete		Details
ITD- Microsoft 2010- Outlook® for						

Close window

Food Stamps Refresh

This course has been previously taken. Listed below are any historical completion dates.

Type	Start Date	Completion Date	Certification Period	Status	Print	
C	21	03/02/2005	03/02/2005	-	4	certificate
C	20	02/15/2005	02/15/2005	-	4	certificate
C	19	02/08/2005	02/08/2005	-	4	certificate

Section information does not exist for classroom course sections marked with an asterisk (*).



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.** A SNAP client is reapplying and is requesting expedited benefits. He has already verified his identity. However, I noticed his name on a DOR Bank Match. The match indicates that he has \$1,200 in a savings account. He claims that he recently withdrew \$850 from this account to pay his rent. This means the client could be entitled to expedited benefits as a household whose combined monthly gross income and assets are less than his combined monthly rent and utilities. Should I approve this client's expedited benefits?
- A. 1.** If a client is reporting information that appears questionable or contradictory, additional information may be requested. See 106 CMR 361.620 and 106 CMR 361.630 for details. However, any additional requests for information or follow-up cannot delay the seven-day processing standard for expedited benefit delivery. The DOR Bank Match outlined in Operations Memo 2013-31 is not a match that is verified upon receipt. To be eligible for expedited benefits, identity is the only verification requirement. Therefore, if an applicant or client contests the amount of his or her account balance reflected on the DOR bank match, expedited benefit verification rules allow you to accept the income and asset information reported by your applicant, as the most up-to-date information. For more details on expedited benefit verification requirements, refer to 106 CMR 365.830. For more information on expedited benefit income requirements, refer to 106 CMR 365.810.
- Q. 2.** For households determined eligible, expedited SNAP benefits must be issued no later than the seventh day from the application filing date. However, when the case manager attempts to contact the applicant but the applicant is unavailable within the first seven days, should expedited benefits still be delivered, as long as the applicant otherwise qualifies for these benefits?
- A. 2.** Yes. In all cases of delayed contact, after you've spoken to the individual and determined that an applicant or client qualifies for expedited benefits, even if this determination is made beyond the initial seven-day period, the expedited process must still be completed. For more information on expedited processing standards, refer to 106 CMR 365.820.

Diversity Quote

Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day.

Anonymous



Operations Memos

External Agency Match: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) electronic Disqualified Recipient System (eDRS)

All

Operations Memo 2013-39A

This Operations Memo announces the implementation of an external data match with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) electronic Disqualified Recipient System (eDRS). eDRS is an internet-based system that contains records of SNAP clients who have been disqualified in other states for Intentional Program Violations (IPVs). However, this match is not considered verified upon receipt and requires the Fraud Investigation and Data Match (FIDM) unit to request the disqualification documents from the state that disqualified the client(s). The investigation may take some time to complete, but benefits cannot be withheld or denied, if the household is otherwise eligible, while the investigation is ongoing. The case manager responsibilities, provided in Operations Memo 2013-39, have changed as the BEACON functionality for entering the disqualification length and level is unavailable. This Operations Memo:

- advises TAO staff of the eDRS database match now available to the Department;
- explains the role of the Fraud Investigation and Data Match (FIDM) unit in the processing of these cases;
- explains case manager responsibilities when processing cases containing disqualified individuals;
- advises staff of the availability of two new ACTUATE reports; and
- obsoletes Operations Memo 2013-39: *External Agency Match: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) electronic Disqualified Recipient System (eDRS)* as the functionality for entering the disqualification length and level is not available to case managers.

TAFDC and EAEDC – Screening for Cash Mismanagement of Funds and Vendor Payments

TAFDC and EAEDC

Operations Memo 2013-42

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to advise TAO staff about:

- the screening process to determine potential cash mismanagement;
- the referral process to Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCEC) and other agencies; and
- when to place clients on vendor payments.



Operations Memos

TAFDC – Clothing Allowance, September 2013

TAFDC

Operations Memo 2013-45

The Department will issue a nonrecurring clothing allowance of \$150 per eligible TAFDC client under the age of 19 for September 2013. This Operations Memo advises DTA staff about the clothing allowance:

- who is eligible;
- amounts for the prorated payments for October- December;
- payment dates; and
- notices.

EAEDC: Rest Home Rate Changes and Automated Recalculation of Benefits

EAEDC

Operations Memo 2013-46

New public per diem rates were approved for Massachusetts rest homes, effective July 1, 2013.

Additionally, rest homes were approved for a separate rate, effective June 1, 2013 through June 30, 2013, as a result of funds earmarked for rate increases for residential care facilities in the 2013 fiscal year budget.

This Operations Memo:

- describes the process for adding the rest home rate changes in BEACON for public per diem rates effective June 1, 2013 through June 30, 2013, and rates effective for July 1, 2013 going forward;
- informs staff about the automated recalculation of clients' EAEDC benefits, using the updated rates;
- informs staff about the issuance of retroactive payments owed to clients for each rate period; and
- advises staff about the centralization and automation of all future rest home rate changes.

This Operations Memo is informational. No case manager action is necessary.

FYI

Globe Santa Fund for 2013

During the last week of August, active TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP clients who live in the Globe Santa geographical area and have a dependent child age 12 and under, will be sent the *Globe Santa Holiday Gift Verification Notice*. This notice lists the name, date of birth and gender of all children in the household who are age 12 and under as of December 31st, 2013. It includes specific instructions for drafting letters to the Globe to submit with the verification, and a checklist to ensure that all information is provided to meet the client's request. A second mailing will occur in early November for families who were approved for TAFDC, EAEDC or SNAP after the first mailing.

Unlike in previous years, these notices will not be printed on green paper. However, they will have the red Santa Claus watermark to assist the Globe in verifying the validity of the notices. TAO staff should encourage clients to use this notice, as it will help the Globe staff process the request.

Clients who did not receive or misplaced the *Globe Santa Holiday Gift Verification* notice may contact their case manager to request another. For clients requesting a replacement, case managers should use the Globe Santa letter option, which is available from the Letter Request page in BEACON. The case manager should print the letter locally, date stamp it with the TAO date stamp, initial the letter and give it to the client making the request.

If a client returns completed holiday gift verification materials to the TAO, the case manager must forward them to Globe Santa at the address on the holiday gift verification letter.

To ensure that *only* clients who live in eligible zip codes receive a Globe Santa letter, BEACON has been programmed to allow the Globe Santa letter to be printed only for a client living within one of the Globe Santa zip codes.

From the Forms File

Revised Brochures

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Brochures

09-169-0813-05 (English)

09-170-0813-05 (Spanish)

09-194-0813-05 (Russian)

09-195-0813-05 (Khmer)

09-196-0813-05 (Portuguese)

09-197-0813-05 (Chinese)

09-198-0813-05 (Vietnamese)

09-199-0813-05 (Arabic)

09-200-0813-05 (Haitian Creole)

SNAP-PB (Rev. 8/2013)

The *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)* brochure has been updated with required Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) language. Additionally, the brochure is now available in other languages and is available for ordering from Document Production at Schraffts. Please discard all old versions of the *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)* brochure and use the revised version.

TAO Meeting Notes