



# Transitions

December 2014

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## Quality Corner

This month we will review two invalid closings or negative errors.

### Invalid Closing

The client was receiving TAFDC and PA SNAP benefits for herself and one child. On June 25, 2014, the case manager entered new income which closed the TAFDC case because the household's countable income was over the program's limit for the household size. A closing notice was sent to the client. On the same day, the PA SNAP case was closed at the request of the client. When processing the closing of the SNAP case, the case manager suppressed the BEACON-generated closing notice.

Quality Control (QC) determined that this was an invalid closing because the client was not notified about the closing of her SNAP case.

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

The case manager should not have suppressed the BEACON-generated closing notice. A client whose case is closed must be sent a notice informing that the case has been closed and the reason for the closing. The closing notice also informs the client of the right to request a fair hearing if there is disagreement with the Department's decision. For more information on Notices of Adverse Action, see 106 CMR 366.200.

### Interim Report Received Timely

This NPA SNAP household consisted of a 23 year-old client and her 6 year-old son. The case was certified as Annual Reporting (AR) with a certification period from December 2, 2013 to December 1, 2014. An Interim Report (IR) was sent to the client on April 17, 2014 and was to be returned by May 2, 2014. The IR was returned by the client prior to the return-by date. The IR was initiated in the Reevaluation page of BEACON. A *Thank You for Returning the Interim Report* notice was mailed to the client on May 1, 2014 acknowledging receipt of the IR. The NPA SNAP case automatically closed on June 1, 2014 for failure to complete an Interim Report.

Quality Control (QC) determined that this was an invalid closing based on the Department's own records which confirmed that the client had, in fact, returned the IR on time.

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

The IR should have been reviewed to determine if an interview was necessary or if a Verification Checklist needed to be issued to the client. There was sufficient time to interview the client (if necessary), request verification and process the Interim Report before the scheduled release date for the automatic case closing.

Business Process redesign (BPR) has incorporated Electronic Document Management (EDM) functionality into BEACON. Newly received documents create Actions that need to be processed. These Actions are automatically prioritized based on document due dates, timely case processing standards and the timely case closing schedule. For additional information regarding the incorporation of EDM into BEACON see Operations Memo 2014-66.

## 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.** My TAFDC client has an active bank account that he hasn't used in a few years. Is he required to have his grant deposited directly into this account?
- A. 1.** Yes, any TAFDC or EAEDC grantee with an active account is required to cooperate with the direct deposit process. Otherwise, the client is subject to sanctioning in accordance with 106 CMR 706.410 (D).
- Q. 2.** My TAFDC applicant said she owes money to her bank. If her grant is directly deposited into her bank account, she will lose hundreds of dollars because the bank will take her grant payment(s) to repay previous late and overdrawn fees assessed on her account. Are there any exemptions to the direct deposit rule?
- A. 2.** While there is no exemption for the client who owes money due to late and overdrawn fees, other exemptions may apply. The direct deposit requirement does not apply if the:
- bank is not accessible by public transportation within one mile of the client's home or within one mile of the client's bank.
  - grantee is disabled and can demonstrate an inability to meet the requirement due to lack of handicapped-accessible transportation services.
  - grantee is a victims of domestic violence and the co-holder of the bank account has a history of physical or emotional abuse, as detailed in 106 CMR 204.120(B)(3)(a) or 321.120 (B)(3)(a).
- Q. 3.** My TAFDC client does not meet the direct deposit exemption or exception qualifications. However, she told me that it will be difficult for her to maintain her bank's required minimum balance. Are there banks that have lower minimum requirements and fewer fees?
- A. 3.** Yes. Certain financial institutions offer terms consistent with the *Basic Banking for Massachusetts* guidelines. These guidelines were designed by the Massachusetts Community and Banking Council to offer low-income households certain banking services. Banks with saving accounts adhering to these guidelines agree to:
- Require no more than \$10 to open an account,
  - Charge no monthly fee on account balances of \$10 or more,
  - Charge a monthly fee of no more than \$1.00, and
  - Pay interest on all account balances of \$10 or more.

To learn more about *Basic Banking for Massachusetts* guidelines and to see the 2014 list of participating *Basic Banking for Massachusetts* banks, use the link below.

[http://mcbc.info/basic\\_participating](http://mcbc.info/basic_participating)

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## From the Hotline *(Continued from Page 3)*

**Q. 4.** Are there other ways cash assistance clients can reduce or minimize their banking fees?

**A. 4.** Yes. Remind clients that:

- It costs \$.85 each time they make three or more EBT cash withdrawals in a month from an ATM;
- If they withdraw benefits from an ATM owned by Bank of America, Sovereign or Citizen's Bank, they will not pay a bank fee. (The \$.85 charge still applies if it is their third or more withdrawal in the month.);
- It is important to check recent fee notices before withdrawing from an ATM; and
- Many stores, including grocery and drug stores, allow cash back with your purchases, free of charge.

See Online Forms "**Save More of Your Cash Benefits!!**" for more details.

**Q. 5.** I understand that a preassembled Voter Registration packet must be handed to all clients at face-to-face applications, recertifications or reevaluations. Does this change how I have to complete the questions on the Voter Registration page on BEACON?

**A. 5.** No, the Voter Registration page will continue to be completed in accordance with existing procedures. Of, course for all face-to-face applications, recertifications or reevaluations the answers to questions 1 and 5 five will be Yes, as the preassembled Voter Registration packet must always be provided.

**Q. 6.** Do I need to hand a preassembled Voter Registration packet to clients when a client reports a change of address in person?

**A. 6.** The preassembled Voter Registration packet should be provided to clients being seen in-person to report an address change.

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### Diversity Quote

**It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.**

**Maya Angelou**

## Online Guide Transmittals

### Business Process Redesign Updates

#### Online Guide Transmittal 2014-7

To ensure that all clients are treated fairly and to assist case managers in the accurate delivery of benefits, updates continue to be made to existing BPR procedures identified in the Guide.

As the Department continues to assess the new BPR model, it has become evident that a number of clarifications are necessary. The updated pages described in this Transmittal are the result of the data collected by Central Office and issues that have been raised by staff.

The following pages have been added to the Business Process Redesign (BPR) section of the Online Guide:

- Printing Document Cover Sheets
- Missing Cash Documents
- Completing BEACON Narratives (Cash)

The following pages in the Business Process Redesign (BPR) section of the Online Guide have been updated:

- Processing Queue
- Greeting TAO Visitors
- WAC – Managing the Waiting Area (formerly titled Managing the Waiting Area)
- WAC – Completing Transactions in the Waiting Area (formerly titled Completing Transactions in the Waiting Area by the WAC)
- Completing BEACON Narratives (SNAP) (formerly titled Completing BEACON Narratives)
- Hours of Operation (Processing Queue)
- Re-indexing Misidentified Documents
- Missing SNAP Documents (formerly titled Missing Documents)
- Completing a Notification in BEACON
- Processing Unidentified Documents

#### New BEACON Online Guide Pages

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapters: Front Office, Processing and Cash Procedures

Page: Printing Document Cover Sheets

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Cash Procedures

Page: Completing BEACON Narratives (Cash)

## Online Guide Transmittals

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Cash Procedures

Page: Missing Cash Documents

Updated BEACON Online Guide Books/Pages

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: BPR Overview

Page: Processing Queue

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Front Office Procedures

Page: Greeting TAO Visitors

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Front Office Procedures

Page: WAC – Managing the Waiting Area (formerly titled Managing the Waiting Area)

Updated BEACON Online Guide Books/Pages

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Front Office Procedures

Page: WAC – Completing Transactions in the Waiting Area (formerly titled Completing Transactions in the Waiting Area by the WAC)

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Processing Procedures

Page: Completing BEACON Narratives (SNAP) (formerly titled Completing BEACON Narratives)

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Processing Procedures

Page: Hours of Operation (Processing Queue)

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Processing Procedures

Page: Missing SNAP Documents (formerly titled Missing Documents)



## Online Guide Transmittals

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapters: Processing and Cash Procedures

Page: Re-indexing Misidentified Documents

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Cash Procedures

Page: Completing a Notification in BEACON

Topic: Business Process Redesign (BPR)

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Central Office Procedures

Page: Processing Unidentified Documents

## TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Processing Federal Tax Information (FTI) Documents

### Online Guide Transmittal 2014-8

Documents containing Federal Tax Information (FTI) are sent to a secure FAX number in Central Office. Documents containing FTI that are received by TAO's must **not** be transmitted via email or facsimile machines.

The following page has been added to the Cross Programs section of the Online Guide:

Topic: Cross Programs

Book: Overpayment and Recoveries

Chapter: Overpayment and Recoveries

Page: Processing Federal Tax Information Documents



## Online Guide Transmittals

### Business Process Redesign Reminders and Online Guide Updates

#### Online Guide Transmittal 2014-9

The new and enhanced Online Guide pages described in this transmittal reinforce the following reminders:

- When SNAP clients contact DTA via the Assistance Line or visit a TAO and wish to complete an interview and that interview is scheduled for a future date, staff must conduct the interview on demand. When a scheduled interview is conducted before the scheduled date, the scheduled interview must be cancelled.
- The completion of Actions and Notifications associated with scanned documents requires that the documents be properly dispositioned. After reviewing and/or entering a document in BEACON, staff must:
  - review the document indexing information, checking for completeness and accuracy;
  - update the indexing information as needed; and
  - update the status of the document.
- When callers report changes or request that a SNAP application be mailed to them via DTA's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system and the information provided is not properly transmitted or cannot be validated, SNAP Actions are generated and/or cash and central office views are populated. These discrepancies must be addressed by the appropriate staff.

The following pages have been added to the Business Process Redesign section of the Online Guide:

- Rescheduling SNAP Appointments;
- Cancelling SNAP Appointments; and
- IVR Requests-Unvalidated Address View.

The following pages have been updated within the Business Process Redesign section of the Online Guide:

- Dispositioning Scanned Documents;
- Completing IVR Change Requests With Unvalidated Addresses (SNAP) (formerly titled Completing IVR Change Requests With No Valid Address);
- Processing IVR SNAP Application Requests with Unvalidated Addresses (formerly titled Processing IVR Requests with Invalid Addresses); and
- Processing IVR Requests with Invalid Data.

## Online Guide Transmittals

New BEACON Online Guide Pages

Topic: Business Process Redesign

Book: Procedures

Chapters: Processing Procedures

Page: Rescheduling SNAP Appointments

Topic: Business Process Redesign

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Processing Procedures

Page: Cancelling SNAP Appointments

Topic: Business Process Redesign

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Cash Procedures

Page: IVR Requests-Unvalidated Address View

Topic: Business Process Redesign

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Front Office, Processing, Cash, and Central Office Procedures

Page Dispositioning Scanned Documents

Topic: Business Process Redesign

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Processing Procedures

Page: Completing IVR Change Requests With Unvalidated Addresses (SNAP) (formerly titled Completing IVR Change Requests With No Valid Address)

Topic: Business Process Redesign

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Central Office Procedures

Page: Processing IVR SNAP Application Requests with Unvalidated Addresses (formerly titled Processing IVR Requests with Invalid Addresses)

Topic: Business Process Redesign

Book: Procedures

Chapter: Central Office Procedures

Page: Processing IVR Requests with Invalid Data

## From the Forms File

### Revised Brochure

02-211-1214-05

YRTK (Rev. 12/2014)

*Your Right to Know Brochure*

The *Your Right to Know Brochure brochures* has been revised. Discard all old versions of this brochure and use the revised version. Other language versions of the *Your Right To Know* brochure will soon be available.

## TAO Meeting Notes