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**Field Operations Memo 2002-1**  
**January 7, 2002**

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff

**From:**  Cescia Derderian, Acting Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

**Re:** 2002 Social Security/SSI COLA for TAFDC, EAEDC and FS

**Overview**

The Social Security and SSI cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) have been scheduled. This Field Operations Memo identifies:

general BEACON activities for processing 2002 Social Security/Supplementary Security Income (SSI) COLA; AU Manager and Supervisor required activity to prepare for 2002 Social Security/SSI COLA; and a new View that was developed to identify all clients receiving RSDI and/or SSI.

Effective January 2002, Social Security benefits and SSI payments will increase by 2.6 percent. The basic Medicare Part B premium will increase from \$50.00 to \$54.00 per month.

**BEACON Actions**

In January 2002, BEACON will automatically update Social Security/SSI COLA amounts for all active TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs with an active or ineligible Assessed Person (AP) without a conversion benefit discrepancy. The Social Security and Supplementary Security Income COLA Batch Program release to FMCS will automatically change February benefit amounts for these AUs. These updated amounts will be displayed on the Income Tab of the Other Income Status window. The amounts displayed on BA have been updated with the new COLA amounts.

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**BEACON Actions  
(continued)**

BEACON will generate income change notices informing active TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs with an active or ineligible AP of changes in their February benefits. These notices can be viewed on the Document History tab.

**Note:** All denied, pending and closed TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamp AUs will have their COLA amount updated on the the Income Tab of the Other Income Status window. EBC requests, however, will not be automatically created and released for these AUs. If AU Managers take action on these AUs (such as (re)opening an AU) they must review the information found on the Income Tab of the Income Status window to ensure that this information is correct and up to date.

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**AU Manager  
Actions**

When updating ongoing AUs and establishing new or reopened AUs on or before January 11, 2002, use the old (pre-January 2002) Social Security and/or SSI amounts.

When updating ongoing AUs and establishing new or reopened AUs after January 11, 2002, use the new Social Security and/or SSI COLA amounts.

Any AU with a discrepant Social Security or SSI amount (e.g., if the amount is unavailable from Social Security or the amount found on BEACON is greater than the new Social Security amount, etc.) will be identified on the "Clients With Social Security/RSDI and/or SSI" View. Detailed information and instructions on Social Security/SSI discrepancies will be issued after the COLA is completed and should be received by Transitional Assistance Offices in February 2002.

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**Supervisor  
Actions**

Supervisors must authorize any pending transaction before close of business on January 11, 2002. This will ensure that recipients receive the correct notice regarding their benefit amount when COLA is run.

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**BEACON  
Conversion  
Benefit  
Discrepancies**

The Social Security and Supplementary Security Income COLA Batch Program release to FMCS will not be automated for any Assistance Units with unresolved Conversion Benefit discrepancies. If an AU still has an unresolved Conversion Benefit discrepancy after January 11, 2002, the COLA batch request will be created with a status of "Pending Authorization" and will not release automatically. The request is displayed on the Interview Wrap-Up window with the Requestor of "batch." AU Managers need to consider the impact of the new data added to the request in resolving the benefit discrepancy. See BEACON Today 39 and 50 for additional information on resolving Conversion Benefit discrepancies.

**To ensure appropriate processing of the COLA batch program, every effort should be made to resolve all Conversion Benefit discrepancies before the close of business on Friday, January 11, 2002.**

**Note:** If an AU Manager, after consulting with his or her supervisor and the Implementation Manager, is unable to determine how to resolve a particular Conversion Benefit discrepancy, the Implementation Manager should call the Customer Service Center at (617) 348-5290 for assistance.

**"Clients With  
Social Security/  
RSDI and/or SSI"  
View**

The "Clients With Social Security/RSDI and/or SSI" View will permit AU Managers to access information for all active AUs with an active or ineligible AP with RSDI and/or SSI income.

The information provided in this View will include:

<u>Data Field</u>	<u>Information Provided</u>
client	AP name
SSN	AP SSN
grantee	yes or no
type	RSDI or SSI
old amount	old income amount
amount	new income amount
entered	date of most recent update
verified with	electronically or by letter

**Note:** This View replaces the new "SSI Benefit" View.

Detailed information and instructions regarding the "Clients With Social Security/RSDI and/or SSI" View will be issued after the COLA is completed and should be received by Transitional Assistance Offices in February 2002.

**Questions**

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If you have any questions, have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478. Systems questions should be directed to the Customer Service Center at (617) 348-5290.

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