



# Transitions

November 2012

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Dear Colleagues,

The holiday season is upon us! With it brings a season of giving thanks, spending time with family and reflecting on the past year. I, along with many of you and your families, will spend this season volunteering at food pantries and participating in can and food drives.

So many individuals and families across Massachusetts will be entering this time of the year wondering where food will come from, how they will heat their homes and for too many, where home will be. Our services will be in high demand, our clients often in crisis and our offices overflowing. The history of DTA is written with stories of staff meeting our community members in need with compassion, empathy and material help through our SNAP, training and cash benefits. I want to take another opportunity, at the anniversary of my joining this team, to thank each of you for what you give each day and for the help you will provide over the coming season. I am proud to look back at all we have been able to accomplish as we work to achieve our unselfish common goals.

I look forward to continuing our work together. Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Curley  
Commissioner

## Quality Corner

### Reported Income Not Processed

This SNAP case was a household that included an elderly and disabled individual. The case record indicated that the client received Veterans' benefits of \$767 per month. On the Interim Report (IR), signed on March 27, 2012, the client checked the No Change box. However, when Quality Control (QC) reviewed the IR, the client had reported that his Veterans' benefits had increased to \$797/month. Attached to the IR, the client had submitted an award letter from the Social Security Administration (SSA) indicating that he was now receiving Retirement Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI) benefits. None of the reported information that was included in the IR or the verification that accompanied the IR was processed in BEACON by the case manager.

QC also found that the client had failed to report that he received rental income of \$500 per month for an apartment. Based on the allowable business expenses, the net countable rental income was \$188 per month. When the rental income was included with the increased Veterans' benefits and the RSDI income, the monthly SNAP benefit was calculated to be \$16 per month. The previous absence of the RSDI income and the rental income in BEACON caused an overpayment error of \$184 for the review month. The bulk of the error is attributable to the RSDI income not being used in the SNAP benefit calculation.

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

Many clients select the No Change box on the IR; however, the case manager must also review the IR to see if the information the client has recorded represents any change when compared to information already in BEACON. It is common for clients to report No Change but then include verifications with the IR or make changes where necessary in the appropriate section of the IR. It is important for case managers to review the entire IR to determine if there are changes that must be processed. A checked No Change box on an IR does not always mean that there are, in fact, no changes. For more information on processing Interim Reports, see Operations Memo 2011-43.

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### Diversity Quote

**“If you accept the expectations of others, especially negative ones, then you never will change the outcome.”**

**Michael Jordan**

## Training Corner

### Updating Your PACE Profile

The Commonwealth’s Performance and Career Enhancement (PACE) system is the learning management system that allows employees to sign up for courses. It maintains your training transcript, even when you transfer to a different state agency. When you register for a course in PACE, an email is sent to you and to your manager confirming your enrollment. PACE uses the information that you entered into your PACE profile when you first logged into PACE. For some of us, that may have been over four years ago, when PACE first came online.

Our Department’s Training Unit often receives emails and phone calls reporting:

- “I enrolled in a course, but I didn’t get an email confirmation.”
- “I received an email confirming that one of my staff has enrolled in a class, but they transferred out of this office several months ago.”
- “One of my staff enrolled in a class, but I didn’t get an email notification.”

You can eliminate these situations by keeping PACE updated with your correct email address. The Training Unit is unable to monitor all 1500 DTA profiles. By updating your own profile, you can avoid delays and save time. Here’s how:

#### Steps

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Login into PACE.</li> <li>2. Go to Personal KC.</li> <li>3. Click the My Portfolio Tab.</li> <li>4. Select Update User Profile.</li> <li>5. Check your own email address and if it is not correct, change it.</li> <li>6. To find your manager’s email, select Find Manager, determine your job function/location and then follow the steps below.</li> </ol>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TAO Staff</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Type DTA in the Last Name field.</li> <li>b. Scroll down to find your TAO name.</li> <li>c. Click the radio button and then click Submit.</li> <li>d. Scroll to the bottom and click Submit.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Central Office Staff and TAO Managers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Type your manager’s last name in the Last Name field.</li> <li>b. Scroll down to find your manager’s name.</li> <li>c. Click the radio button next to his or her name and then click <b>Submit</b>.</li> <li>d. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click <b>Submit</b>.</li> </ol>

For more information, see the link to Job Aid #5 - *Updating Your PACE Profile* on DTA Online.



## From the Hotline

If you have any questions on this column or on other policy and procedural material, please have your Hotline designee call the **Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478**. At the request of Field Operations, this month's *From the Hotline* includes a user-friendly chart of policy guidelines concerning timeliness standards for case maintenance activities in the TAFDC and EAEDC programs.

Activity	106 CMR:	Rule
Child Care Referral	207.210(A)	While waiting to begin activity, start referral 2 weeks prior to client's participation. For activities extending beyond 6 months, must complete referral before beginning of 7th month. See FYI, <i>Transitions</i> , May 2012.
Copies from case record and client access to case record	701.330, 702.410, and 105.030	Unless otherwise prohibited for privacy reasons, access and/or copies must be made ASAP, but in no case later than 20 days from receipt of client request. See Operations Memo 2010-50 on client confidentiality rules.
Remove AU member	701.420	Client required to report change within 10 calendar days of change. Implement change ASAP once reported.
Replace EBT Card	701.450	ASAP, no later than 5 calendar days via mail or 2 business days if request made in person, per Operations Memo 2011-9.

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**From the Hotline** *(Continued from page 4)*

Activity	106 CMR:	Rule
Issue MassHealth Card	702.125(F), 701.520(B) 701.530(C)	Within one working day from client request. No DTA written notice required for request.
Increase in grant (includes adding AU member)	702.400, 701.530	No later than 19 calendar days from client request. (Client has 10 calendar days in which to provide verifications.)*
Replacement of Lost and Stolen Checks	701.530, 706.510 and 706.520	Twelve calendar days from day of client request to check issuance on uncashed check; 26 calendar days from day of client request to check issuance on cashed checks.
TAFDC Related Services: funeral/final disposition (705.700), infant benefits (705.600), relocation (705.350), medical transportation (705.150)	701.530	No later than 45 calendar days from client request. (Client has 26 calendar days in which to provide verifications.)*
Transfer Cases (includes change of address)	701.530 and 702.400	No later than 14 calendar days from client request. (Client has 8 calendar days, if verification necessary.)* See Operations Memo 2012-39.

\*Per 106 CMR 701.510, the allowable time period for providing benefits to eligible clients is extended by the number of days, if any, that a client is late in providing verification. Per 701.520, when a client is late in providing required verifications, but does so within 30 days of notification (or 45 days for TAFDC-Related Services), the request must be processed. If timely and adequate notice has been given, and verification has not been provided by the end of 30 days (or 45 days for TAFDC-Related Services) after it was requested, or if verification provided shows that the client is ineligible, the benefit must be denied.

## From the Forms File

### Revised Brochures

The following brochures have been revised to inform clients that a new state law was enacted which prohibits cash clients from using DTA direct cash assistance held on electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to pay for certain items and services.

Other language versions of the EAEDC and Your Right To Know will soon be available. Refer to Operations Memo 2012-49 for more information and discard all old versions of these brochures.

*18-825-1112-05*

*18-826-1112-05(S)*

*EBT-TB Brochure (Rev. 11/2012)*

*Electronic Benefit Transfer*

*02-210-1112-05*

*02-213-1112-05(S)*

*TAFDC-PB (Rev. 11/2012)*

*Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Brochure*

*02-211-1112-05*

*02-212-1112-05(S)*

*YRTK (Rev. 11/2012)*

*Your Right to Know Brochure*

*04-040-1112-05*

*EAEDC-PB (Rev. 11/2012)*

*Emergency Aid to Elderly Disabled and Children Brochure*

## Operations Memos

### **TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Voter Registration BEACON Changes**

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP  
Operations Memo 2012-29D

The National Voter Registration Act requires the Department to provide general voter registration services to all applicants and clients. All states must comply with this law.

As a result of changes to the BEACON Voter Registration page over the course of several months, DTA staff would need to access several Operations Memos and procedural documents to determine the functionality of this page. The purpose of this Operations Memo is to advise DTA staff about the complete functionality of the Voter Registration page in one document.

### **EAEDC: Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Extended for Haiti**

EAEDC  
Field Operations Memo 2012-47

This Operations Memo advises staff that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently extended Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti for an additional 18 months from January 23, 2013 through July 22, 2014. Effective January 23, 2013, DHS will allow Haitian nationals currently approved for TPS who have continuously resided in the U.S. since January 12, 2011 and who have been continuously present in the U.S. since July 23, 2011 to remain in the U.S. through July 22, 2014 provided they re-register with USCIS. The 60-day re-registration period for the TPS extension runs from October 1, 2012 through November 30, 2012.

The memo provides details concerning the Haiti TPS and guidance on EAEDC eligibility for Haitian nationals granted TPS provided they meet all other EAEDC nonfinancial and financial requirements.

### **TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Facsimile and System Generated Social Security Numbers (SSNs) Cleanup**

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP  
Operations Memo 2012-48

An audit by the United States Department of Agriculture has identified that a number of clients have DTA-assigned Facsimile or System Generated Social Security numbers (SSNs) on file who should have provided DTA with a valid SSN. As a result, DTA has established an automated process for updating the SSN for these clients. This memo informs case managers about the automated process for updating client records with a valid SSN.



## Operations Memos

### TAFDC – Learnfare Additional Mailing

TAFDC

Operations Memo 2012-53

Operations Memo 2012-53A

The TAFDC Learnfare requirement mandates that any child of a nondisabled grantee who is age 6 (or in first grade, whichever occurs later) through age 13 must attend school regularly. Verification of attendance must be obtained for any child who is subject to the Learnfare requirement. To comply with Learnfare rules, a child may not have more than eight unexcused absences in each quarter.

Operations Memo 2012-43 advised TAO staff about an initial mailing to this population to inform clients of this requirement. This Operations Memo advises TAO staff about:

- the additional mailing to grantees who did not respond to the initial mailing;
- a report being sent to the TAOs;
- how to process the returned forms; and
- how to treat cases when forms are not returned.

Operations Memo 2012-53A was issued correcting procedures in and obsoleting Operations Memo 2012-53.

### TAFDC – EBT Process Mailing about Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card Fees, Replacements and Notices

TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP

Operations Memo 2012-54

In October, the Department sent notices to any cash and/or SNAP household informing clients that DTA records show they had received more than four replacement cards within the past year and explained that EBT cards can be used continuously. The notice advised the client to call their case manager if they felt a reasonable accommodation was needed, if they felt the card was being used inappropriately, or to request guidance in the use of EBT cards.

Operations Memo 2012-50 advised TAO staff about the notice and the process to be followed when a client makes contact with the Department about receiving the notice. Operations Memo 2012-54 advises TAO staff about:

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



## Operations Memos

### Elderly/Disabled Prefilled Recertification Form

SNAP

Operations Memo 2012-55

This Operations Memo introduces the new prefilled SNAP Elderly Disabled Recertification Form which as of November 19, 2012 is being sent to households that have earned income and include a household member who is elderly or disabled. The form is similar to the *Interim Report* form created for Annual Reporting and consists of two parts. Part 1, *Current Household Information* is prefilled with the information that is in the BEACON record and instructs the client to review the information and mark the checkboxes when there is no change or to report any changes on Part 2 *Change Report*. A temporary cover letter will also be attached to the recertification form that introduces the form to clients and instructs them on how to complete it.

Case managers are also reminded of the *No Interview* waiver for these households with an elderly or disabled member and no earned income. Operations Memo 2011-29: *Reinstatement of the Elderly/Disabled No Interview Waiver* is available on Policy Online to assist case managers in the processing of these cases.

## TAO Meeting Notes