

Quality Corner

This month we will review two negative errors (invalid closings and denials) that occurred in NPA cases. The first negative error was caused by a failure to interview and a failure to send a Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI). The second error was caused by the unintentional use of figures on a paystub that were recorded as wages.

No Interview or Notice of Missed Interview

The application for SNAP benefits was received for a household of three. This included the client and two children. The case was subsequently denied for failure to provide verifications. A verification checklist requesting wages, child support income and shelter expense was found in the case record. Although some work was done on this case, the denial was invalid because there was no evidence in the case record or in BEACON to indicate whether or not the client was interviewed. Also, there was no NOMI to indicate whether or not the client had missed a scheduled interview.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Clients who cannot be reached by phone must be sent a BEACON-generated appointment letter. If the client misses the scheduled application interview (telephone or face-to-face), a BEACON-generated NOMI must be sent. Case managers must indicate on the BEACON Narratives tab whether or not the client was interviewed by phone. There has been a significant increase in the number of negative errors based on lack of evidence that an interview was scheduled and/or conducted, and whether or not a NOMI was sent. In many instances, a narrative entry addressing the client interview could prevent a negative error. For more information on negative errors, see *Negative Errors and How to Avoid Them* on Policy Online/Job Aids. Other helpful information

regarding SNAP application procedures include Field Operations Memo 2006-30 and Field Operations Memo 2007-16.

Wrong Wages

A SNAP application was received in the TAO for a household of one. The monthly income for this case was earnings of \$911.40 per month verified by paystubs showing gross amounts of \$135.05, \$122.10, \$463.17 and \$121.03. The client also received RSDI of \$812 per month. The application was subsequently denied for income in excess of the program limits for the household size.

QC determined that the SNAP denial was invalid because the case manager used an incorrect amount from one of the paystubs. The amount in question, \$463.17, represented a year-to-date amount and not the client's pay for that particular week. The correct pay for that week was \$95.87. QC recalculated the case using the correct amount and determined that the client was eligible for \$14 in SNAP benefits.

What's a Case Manager to Do?

Case managers must be very careful when extracting information from proofs clients submit. This is especially critical when recording income from paystubs. In this case, an amount of \$463.17 was not representative of the client's earnings since the wages for the other three pay weeks were \$135.05, \$122.10 and \$121.03 respectively. Closer inspection of the paystubs would have revealed the correct amount for that week. If the \$463.17 was correct for that week, the case manager would have had to determine whether the applicant was paid like this every month or whether this paystub was an anomaly that needed to be disregarded.