



***Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance***


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**Online Guide Transmittal 2022-5
January 14, 2022**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: Cross Programs: Revised COVID-19 Procedures for Disability Verification Process

Overview

On March 10, 2020, a State of Emergency was declared by Governor Baker to support the Commonwealth's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Since then, DTA has taken the necessary steps to ensure that clients receive benefits in a timely manner and do not experience a disruption in ongoing benefits. Online Guide updates are being issued to revise procedures as appropriate.

Effective, January 14, 2022, self-declarations will no longer be accepted to verify disability for EAEDC. The new *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement* will be used to verify disability. Please see procedures outlined below under Case Manager guidance for instances when the form may not be needed because of a verified disability on file. EAEDC clients or EAEDC-SNAP clients who report difficulty having the new *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement* completed due to COVID related reasons may provide a verbal self-declaration of their disability temporarily.

The *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement* must now be used to verify disability for:

- EAEDC applicants,
- EAEDC clients at recertification who only have a self-declaration on file for their disability verification,
- noncitizen EAEDC clients 65 years and over, who are ineligible for SNAP due to the 5-year bar but who may be eligible if disabled, and
- noncitizen EAEDC clients, 65 years and under who are receiving EAEDC because of a disability.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of the following updated procedures.

- The *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement* is now available to verify disability for certain clients.
 - A new Online Guide page, EAEDC COVID Procedures for Disability Verification Process has been added to the COVID-19 book.
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Case Manager Responsibilities

Self-declarations will **no longer** be an accepted verification of disability for EAEDC applications filed on or after January 14, 2022.

Case managers must first check to see if there is a record for a prior disability determination by UMASS/DES in the Electronic Case Folder (ECF). If there is a prior EAEDC disability determination from this source, and the duration has not expired, it is to be used for the current EAEDC disability determination. The client is considered to be disabled, and does not need re-verify, until that expiration.

If you are not able to verify disability by UMASS/DES, the Social Security Administration (SSA), MassHealth, or Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the client must be provided the *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement*. To issue the form, you must enter a mandatory, User-Entered verification on the Verifications tab. The new EAEDC COVID Procedures for Disability Verification Process Online Guide page outlines the complete procedures.

If a client states they are unable to get the form completed during the application or reevaluation time-period, you must approve the case, if otherwise eligible. For verification of disability, you must accept a verbal self-declaration of disability and set a reminder to send a VC-1 along with the *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement* when the client states they will be able to have the form filled out. For example, if an applicant says they cannot get the form filled out now, but they do have an appointment for March 15th you must set an Outlook reminder for March 5th to send a VC-1 and the *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement* on that date.

If the client is not sure when they will be able to get the form filled out, you must set an Outlook reminder to send a VC-1 and the *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement* in 90 days. A verbal self-declaration is sufficient to verify they were not able to obtain a signed EAEDC Medical Provider Statement due to COVID-related reasons.

A narrative detailing the circumstances must be entered on all cases specifying the details as to why they could not return the form at this time and expected timeframes to do so.

**Case Manager
Responsibilities
Continued**

IMPORTANT

Clients applying for EAEDC as disabled individuals who verbally self-declare that they are unable to obtain an EAEDC Medical Provider Statement due to COVID must also verbally self-declare their disability is expected to last 60 days or more and that it substantially reduces or eliminates their ability to support their self.

If the client is not otherwise eligible for SNAP, you must ask:

Do you have a disability that is expected to last 12 months or more and that substantially reduces or eliminates your ability to support yourself? ___ **Yes** ___ **No**

They must answer yes to be eligible for SNAP.

Reminder: Once a client provides a completed *EAEDC Medical Provider Statement*, or other acceptable proof, which verifies their disability, they will not need to re-verify their disability until updated procedures are made available.

IMPORTANT: Verification of immunization for TAFDC and caretaker status for EAEDC remain as verbal self-declarations under COVID procedures. Staff will be notified when these return to regular verification requirements.

**New
Online Guide
Page**

Book: COVID-19
Page: EAEDC COVID Procedures for Disability Verification Process

**Revised
Online Guide
Page**

Book: COVID-19
Page: Temporary COVID-19 Verification Procedures

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk
