On April 1, 2012, the Commonwealth will become the 43rd state to assume responsibility for administering its SSI State Supplement Program (SSP) due to the escalating cost of purchasing federal administration services. SSP payments supplement SSI benefits with state funds for Massachusetts residents. The Commonwealth pays the Social Security Administration (SSA) approximately $25 million per year to administer its SSP. The change to state administration will result in substantial savings of more than $15M annually, with little or no change for SSP recipients. EOHHS, DTA and MCB have delegated administration of the SSP to UMass Medical School.

What this change will mean for current SSP recipients:

* Payment issuance will change. SSP recipients who also receive SSI will now get two monthly payments, one from SSA and one from the Commonwealth. Recipients who only receive SSP will continue to get one monthly payment from the Commonwealth instead of SSA. Recipients who are not eligible for SSI will report changes in their circumstances to the Commonwealth.

What this change will mean for new SSP applicants after April 1:

* An SSP application will still begin with an application for SSI.
* On a daily basis, SSA will electronically notify the Commonwealth of the eligibility decision for SSI applications.
* SSA eligibility reviews for SSI will continue to act as SSP determinations, including disability evaluations. There will be no need for an additional disability review.
* Those persons who are eligible for SSI are also eligible for SSP. In some instances, they will be asked to provide information on their living situation, just as they are currently asked by SSA.
* Because SSP income standards are higher than SSI income standards, persons who are ineligible for SSI because of income but otherwise eligible for SSI may be eligible for SSP.
* If an applicant ineligible for SSI but potentially eligible for SSP has claimed a disability and does not have a valid disability review on file with SSA or DES, the Commonwealth will conduct a disability review. Applicants with a current disability review on file with MassHealth or DTA through DES will not need a second SSI/SSP review**.**

How SSP recipients will be told about the change and how they can get more information:

* Beginning February 13, SSP recipients will receive an informational letter from the Commissioners of DTA and MCB along with an SSP Questions and Answers fact sheet.
* On February 13, the Massachusetts SSP Customer Service Call Center will open. This toll-free phone line will be open Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm to answer any questions clients may have.
* Also on February 13, program information will be available on the SSP website which is accessed through the EOHHS website.
* In early March, recipients will receive a letter from SSA explaining how their monthly SSA payment will change to include only their SSI benefits.

Please send your thoughts and questions on the SSP transition to sspinfo@umassmed.edu.