



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Field Operations Memo 2004-10
March 10, 2004

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: **EAEDC: Reinstating the Eligibility Category of Participating in the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Previous Disability Standards**

Overview

Field Operations Memo 2004-7 and Field Operations Memo 2004-8 told TAO Staff that budget shortfalls left the Department without sufficient EAEDC funding for the remainder of fiscal year 2004. This deficiency required the elimination of Participating in the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Program as a categorical eligibility reason for EAEDC and revised the EAEDC medical standards to conform to the SSI disability criteria (excluding the durational requirement).

These changes, issued by State Letter 1274, were effective March 1, 2004 for all EAEDC applicants and recipients. These changes were rescinded.

We appreciate your patience during this transition period.

Regulations

State Letter 1274 was rescinded. State Letter 1274 A reinstates the previously eliminated policy and is effective March 9, 2004.

Obsolete Memos

This Field Operations Memo obsoletes Field Operations Memo 2004-7 and Field Operations Memo 2004-8.

Forms

The *EAEDC Medical Report* has been changed to reflect the disability standards in effect prior to March 1, 2004. A supply is being printed and will be sent from Schraffts. It can be identified by a revision date of (Rev. (2) 3/2004) in the lower left-hand corner of the cover letter. AU Managers **must** destroy any old *EAEDC Medical Report* forms with the revision dates of (Rev. 5/98) and (Rev. 3/2004).

The *Client Authorization to Verify Vocational Rehabilitation Participation (EAEDC-5)* and the *Verification of Involvement in a Vocational Rehabilitation Program (EAEDC-6)* obsoleted in the March 2004 issue of *Transitions* are reinstated. These forms may now be ordered online.

**Impact on
Massachusetts
Rehabilitation
Commission
(MRC)
Applications
Processed
Between
February 20 and
February 27**

For applications processed between February 20, 2004 and February 27, 2004 following procedures found in Field Operations Memo 2004-7, AU Managers were instructed to give or mail the MRC Informational Notice for Applicants because these applicants were not included in the February 20, 2004 mailing.

If these applicants did not qualify for EAEDC for another reason other than MRC, AU Managers must now mail Attachment A to these applicants and approve the AU with an effective date of March 1, 2004. These applicants should have been given a retroactive payment for benefits owed prior to the March 1, 2004 date.

Note: A supply of Attachment A will **not** be sent from Schraffts. Copies must be made at each TAO. Be sure to write the TAO address at the top of each notice.

Be sure to select **“Participating in MRC”** as the Required Status Reason on the Work Requirements window and **“Mass Rehab Commission”** as the Determination Source on the Disability window.

If otherwise eligible for and currently receiving Food Stamp benefits, recalculate the Food Stamp benefits when authorizing the AU approval.

**Impact on
Massachusetts
Rehabilitation
Commission
(MRC)
Applications
Taken After to
March 1, 2004**

Any application for EAEDC based on participation in the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) that was denied by the TAO following procedures found in Field Operations Memo 2004-7 must be contacted, have a new application taken and if otherwise eligible be approved retroactive to the original application date.

AU Managers should review the NFL-5s sent to these applicants and send them an appointment letter to establish eligibility informing them that if eligible, they will be issued retroactive benefits.

If the former applicant keeps the appointment, take a new application and if otherwise eligible, establish the AU effective retroactive to the original application date. Be sure to select **“Participating in MRC”** as the Required Status Reason on the Work Requirements window and **“Mass Rehab Commission”** as the Determination Source on the Disability window. If otherwise eligible for and currently receiving Food Stamp benefits, recalculate the Food Stamp benefits when authorizing the AU approval.

If the former applicant does not keep the appointment, send out a second appointment letter advising the applicant that if he or she does not keep this appointment, **he or she may not be eligible for retroactive benefits.**

If the appointment is subsequently kept, establish the AU following procedures above.

If the former applicant does not keep the second appointment, no further action is needed.

**Impact on
Massachusetts
Rehabilitation
Commission
(MRC) Recipients**

On February 20, 2004 an MRC Informational Notice was sent to EAEDC recipients who were listed on the Work Requirements window as participating in MRC, informing them of the elimination of participating in MRC as an eligibility condition for EAEDC. The System will send a new notice (Attachment B) to these recipients prior to March 31, 2004, informing them of the change.

**Impact on
Massachusetts
Rehabilitation
Commission
(MRC) Recipients
(continued)**

No MRC recipient will be closed by MIS on March 15, 2004. AU Managers **must not** close an MRC recipient for failure to return the Medical Report or because the doctor indicated the person did not meet the disability standards.

AU Managers must be sure to make changes to the Required Status Reason on the Work Requirements and Disability windows. **It is extremely important that for those AUs who had been changed on the System to “Disabled,” the “Disabled” reason be replaced with the “Participating in MRC” reason on the EAEDC tab of the Work Requirements window and “Mass Rehab Commission” as the Determination Source on the Disability window. This will prevent the automatic disability process from happening and also prevent the possible incorrect closing of these recipients for failure to provide a Medical Report.**

If the EAEDC recipient also receives food stamp benefits, make sure the Required Status Reason is “Meets TAFDC/EAEDC Requirements” on the Food Stamp tab of the Work Requirements window.

**Disability
Standards**

The Department’s decision to resume using the disability standards in effect prior to March 1, 2004, does not impact the AU Manager’s role in the disability determination process currently in place.

Central Office and the Disability Evaluation Services (DES) are ensuring that applicants’ and recipients’ disabilities are being evaluated based on the disability standards in effect prior to March 1, 2004.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

TAO Address _____

Date: _____

Dear _____:

We sent you a notice telling you that because of a possible change in the EAEDC rules, your application would be denied unless you were eligible for a reason other than participating in a program with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.

We are writing to tell you that more money is being provided for the EAEDC Program. You may be eligible while you participate in a program with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. You do not need to send in a Medical Report and Disability Supplement to show that you are eligible.

If you did send in a Medical Report and a Disability Supplement to your worker, this will not affect your future benefits.

You will receive another notice about your EAEDC benefits in the near future.

If you have any additional questions you should contact your worker.

We apologize for any confusion this may have caused you.

Date: _____

Dear [Name]:

On February 20, we sent you a notice telling you that your eligibility for EAEDC may end because of a possible change in the EAEDC rules.

We are writing to tell you that more money is being provided for the EAEDC Program. You will be eligible while you participate in a program with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. You do not need to send in a Medical Report and Disability Supplement to show that you are eligible.

If you did send in a Medical Report and a Disability Supplement to your worker, this will not affect your future benefits.

If you are receiving food stamp benefits your food stamp benefits will continue.

If you are not receiving food stamp benefits, contact your worker to see if you are eligible for food stamp benefits.

If you have any additional questions you should contact your worker.

We apologize for any confusion this may have caused you.