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Field Operations Memo 2007-10
February 20, 2007

To:  **Transitional Assistance Office Staff**

From: **John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations**

Re: **Citizenship Verification for MassHealth Eligibility for TAFDC and EAEDC Citizen Applicants**

Overview

Effective July 1, 2006, federal law required all persons who are U.S. citizens and applying for MassHealth to provide proof of their U.S. citizenship to MassHealth. However, this change in law did not affect certain non-citizens, many of whom continue to be eligible for MassHealth, TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamps.

As a result of this law, effective immediately, AU Managers should strongly encourage all TAFDC and EAEDC applicants who are citizens either by birth or naturalization to submit the MassHealth-preferred citizenship verifications described in this memo.

All TAFDC and EAEDC applicants who are citizens either by birth or naturalization will have to provide documentation of citizenship to either DTA or MassHealth in accordance with MassHealth regulations, or risk not receiving MassHealth benefits. Verification of citizenship is a one time requirement. Once a citizen applicant has submitted satisfactory verification they will not be required to submit the citizenship verification again to DTA or MassHealth. **Applications for Food Stamps are not affected by this change in Federal law.**

Applications for TAFDC, EAEDC and Food Stamps should not be delayed or denied if an applicant does not submit verifications acceptable to MassHealth.

The documentation requirements, as stated in DTA policy, for persons who are immigrants and are not U.S. citizens have not changed.

Purpose of Memo

The purpose of this memo is to inform TAO staff about MassHealth citizenship verification requirements and how these requirements affect TAFDC and EAEDC citizen applicants.

Obsolete Memo

Field Operations Memo 2006-55: "Applicant Citizenship Verification for MassHealth Eligibility: TAFDC and EAEDC," is now obsolete.

Verification of Citizenship

TAFDC

Proof of citizenship is not a required verification for TAFDC applicants unless it is questionable. However, to assist applicants in meeting MassHealth citizenship verification requirements, applicants who are citizens either by birth or naturalization should now be asked to provide verification of citizenship during the TAFDC application process. TAFDC applications should not be delayed or denied pending receipt of these verifications for individuals who are otherwise eligible.

EAEDC

Verification of citizenship or eligible noncitizen status **continues to be** required for EAEDC applicants. AU Managers should strongly encourage EAEDC applicants to submit the MassHealth-preferred citizenship verifications if he or she is a citizen. However, EAEDC applicants can continue to verify their citizenship for purposes of EAEDC by using the range of verifications permitted by 106 CMR 320.610 and 106 CMR 320.500. EAEDC applications should not be delayed or denied if citizen applicants do not provide verification of citizenship acceptable to MassHealth.

Note: Food Stamp policy regarding verification of citizenship is unchanged. Citizenship must be verified in accordance with 106 CMR 362.210 only when questionable. See 106 CMR 361.620 for Food Stamp policy regarding questionable information.

**Documents
Accepted by
MassHealth for
Verifying
Citizenship**

AU Managers should inform TAFDC and EAEDC applicants who are citizens, either by birth or by naturalization, of the MassHealth citizenship verification requirement. AU Managers should attempt to obtain one of the following documents to verify citizenship for MassHealth for each TAFDC and EAEDC applicant. The following three documents are most commonly used by DTA to verify citizenship and are accepted by MassHealth:

- a Birth Certificate;
- a Hospital Birth Record or (NOB-1) signed by appropriate hospital official; and
- a Certificate of Naturalization (DHS Form N-550 or N-570).

The following documents are acceptable verifications for DTA and MassHealth:

- a U.S. passport;
- a U.S. Citizen Resident's Card (INS Form I-197);
- a U.S. Citizen Identity Card (INS Form I-179);
- Military Service Papers indicating citizenship;
- Proof that parents became naturalized citizens before the child turned age 18 or the child married while under age 18;
- U.S. Census Records; and
- Provincial Union of Indians Card issued by the Tribal Nation.

Adoptive children referenced in State Letter 1244 (2/1/2003) and 106 CMR 203.670 must still provide citizenship documentation.

Each member of the Assistance Unit, adults and children, must provide a separate verification of their own citizenship or naturalization for MassHealth eligibility. **For instance, the name and birthplace of a parent on a child's birth certificate is not considered an acceptable verification of that parent's citizenship.** The parent must have one of the verifications listed above in order to be considered a citizen for MassHealth purposes.

**Documents
Accepted by
MassHealth for
Verifying
Citizenship
(continued)**

AU Managers should request the documents listed on the previous page to ensure that TAFDC and EAEDC applicants who are citizens either by birth or naturalization will be in compliance with MassHealth regulations. If one of those documents is not available, and verification of citizenship is needed for purposes of establishing eligibility for TAFDC or EAEDC, AU Managers must still accept one of the citizenship or naturalization verifications found in the list in the BEACON Verifications Tab to establish TAFDC or EAEDC eligibility, even though these verifications will not be accepted by MassHealth.

If the applicant is assumed to be a citizen but the verifications listed on the previous page are not available and none of the other verifications are available, AU Managers should take the following steps:

- Click on the Verifications Tab;
- Select “US Citizen”;
- Click on the “Details” Button to open the “Verified With” Window;
- Select “Other”;
- Click on “Select.” This will take you to the Verifications Detail Window;
- Enter “TAFDC applicant assumed to be citizen” in the “Other” field; and
- Click on “Save,” then “Close.”

Beginning in April, more detailed citizenship verifications submitted by applicants will be forwarded to MassHealth in a data exchange. MassHealth may deny benefits to those recipients who cannot provide verifications recognized by MassHealth. Therefore, it is important to make sure that all applicants who are citizens provide verifications that will be accepted by MassHealth.

Note: All other financial and nonfinancial requirements for non-citizens remain the same.

Questions

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