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Field Operations Memo 97-45
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To: Local Office Staff

From:  **Joyce Sampson**
Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: EBT Benefits Which Have Not Been Accessed For 30 Days or More

Background

Workers receive a DCR message listing recipients who have not accessed their EBT benefits for 30 days or more. Field Operations Memo 97-17 informed workers that if the unaccessed benefit was \$100 or more, they should look at the PACES check screen to see the original amount that was authorized and compare it to the amount on the DCR message to determine whether any portion of the cash and/or food stamp authorizations had ever been withdrawn.

“Report of EBT Benefits Which Have Not Been Accessed By Client For More Than 30 Days”

A ***“Report of EBT Benefits Which Have Not Been Accessed By Client For More Than 30 Days”*** has been sent to local offices. This report lists recipients, by CAN, who have not accessed their EBT benefits for more than 30 days. Both the original benefit amount and the available benefit amount are listed. This report eliminates the need to look at the PACES check screen to determine whether a recipient accessed any portion of his or her cash and/or food stamp authorizations.

Note: This report will be sent to local offices each month in addition to the 60-day and 90-day reports described in Field Operations Memo 97-17.

Which Benefits Are Unaccessed

When a recipient accesses his or her EBT benefits, the **oldest** benefit is used first. Therefore, if an active recipient does not access his or her EBT benefits for 30 days or more, there will be other benefits in the EBT account that also have not been accessed.

The "*Report of EBT Benefits Which Have Not Been Accessed By Client For More Than 30 Days*" is run on the 25th of each month and identifies only those EBT benefits that were deposited in the previous month. It does not identify **all** unaccessed benefits, only those that have **not** been accessed for 30 days or more. E.g., unaccessed cash and/or food stamp benefits from one month (April) will appear on the "*Report of EBT Benefits Which Have Not Been Accessed By Client For More Than 30 Days*" which is created on the 25th of the following month (May). The EBT benefits deposited in May will not appear on the May 25th report.

Example: Mary Smith's cash benefits were deposited on April 4th, April 19th, May 4th and May 19th. If Mary Smith has not accessed her **oldest** cash benefit deposited in the EBT account on April 4th, this means she has not accessed any of the cash benefits deposited to the EBT account for April 19th, May 4th or May 19th.

Both the April 4th and the April 19th EBT cash benefits will appear on the May 25th report since they were not accessed in 30 days or more. However, it also means the recipient has not accessed the cash benefits deposited in the EBT account on May 4th or May 19th. It is important to note that there are more benefits available than those that appear on the report.

Eligibility Reviews for Recipients Who Have Not Accessed Their benefits for 30 Days or More

The "*Report of EBT Benefits Which Have Not Been Accessed By Client For More Than 30 Days*" is an indicator that certain recipients do not appear to need their benefits for daily living expenses. Field Operations Memo 97-17 instructed workers to contact the recipients with unaccessed cash and/or food stamp benefits of \$100 or more to determine the reason they have not accessed their benefits.

**Eligibility Reviews
for Recipients Who
Have Not Accessed
Their benefits for
30 Days or More
(Cont.)**

Because of the number and amount of unaccessed cash and/or food stamp EBT authorizations, workers should schedule eligibility reviews for recipients (excluding SSI food stamp recipients) who appear on the *“Report of EBT Benefits Which Have Not Been Accessed By Client For More Than 30 Days”* to determine if their circumstances have changed.

**SSI Food Stamp
Recipients**

Since the elderly and disabled SSI food stamp recipients generally receive small food stamp benefit amounts, they may not access their EBT food stamp benefits on a regular basis. Therefore:

- If an SSI food stamp recipient appears on the *“Report of EBT Benefits Which Have Not Been Accessed By Client For More Than 30 Days”*, no action is needed.
 - If an SSI food stamp recipient appears on the 60-day report and has less than \$100 in unaccessed EBT food stamp benefits, contact the SSI food stamp recipient to determine why he or she has not accessed the EBT food stamp benefits and if there is a change that may affect food stamp eligibility.
 - If an SSI food stamp recipient has \$100 or more in unaccessed EBT food stamp benefits and/or appears on the 90-day report, the worker should schedule an eligibility review as this is an indication that there may be a change in circumstances that affects eligibility.
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Questions

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