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Field Operations Memo 97-72
December 29, 1997

TO: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

FROM: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

RE: PRISM II 24-Month Clock Exception Report

Background

PRISM II uses information from FMCS to identify those nonexempt recipients who are subject to the 24-month time-limited benefit rule. PRISM II also tracks the number of months used by a nonexempt recipient since December 1996. This information is displayed on the "State Clock" tab of the Client Detail screen.

Note: Refer to PRISM II User's Guide, Chapter V and Appendix C for screen documentation and 24-month clock specification details.

The months of December 1996 through October 1997 have now been accreted for nonexempt recipients who met the criteria for the 24-month time-limit rule.

During the clock sweep process, PRISM II identified certain recipients with insufficient data to determine whether or not to accrete a particular month. Months with insufficient data were not accreted.

Purpose of Memo

This memo:

- identifies the situations in which PRISM II is unable to determine if a month(s) should accrete;
 - describes the report which identifies the cases, recipients and month(s) in question; and
 - explains the procedures workers must follow to review the case and decide if a manual adjustment is required.
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Situations in Which PRISM II Cannot Accrete a Month

PRISM II evaluates the following data from FMCS to determine if a month should accrete:

- Program Code (PACES TD block 44)
- Personal Action Reason (block 89)
- SAVE Code (block 43)
- Benefit Amount, and, if benefit amount is less than \$10, Deduction Code (block 144)

There are four basic situations in which PRISM II is unable to determine if a month should accrete. They are:

- The benefit amount for the month being looked at is less than \$10 and PRISM II cannot determine what the deduction code was for that month;
- A sanctioned recipient in an active assistance unit (AU) is also active or sanctioned in another AU, making it impossible for PRISM II to determine which AU's data are correct;

Situations in Which PRISM II Cannot Accrete a Month (continued)

- A sanctioned recipient in an active AU is not in receipt of food stamps or MassHealth in the AU and is not in a related NPA case containing the same household members. This indicates that possibly the recipient is no longer in the TAFDC household; and
- Internal systems error causes an insufficient data transfer from FMCS to PRISM II, making a determination impossible.

24-Month Clock Exception Report

A report titled "PRISM 24-Month Clock Exception Report" will be sent to TAOs the week of December 29, 1997. (Note: Nantucket will not receive a report.) The reports are sorted by office and CAN, and identify the following:

- Case SSN and name;
 - Client SSN and name (individual in the AU for whom the month in question could not be accreted);
 - Month(s) which could not be accreted; and
 - Reason the month could not be accreted. The reasons identified on the report are:
 - ◆ **Benefit less than \$10** (during the month in question and the deduction code for that month is unknown);
 - ◆ **Sanctioned** (individual is sanctioned and is either: a) also active or sanctioned in another AU, or b) is not receiving food stamps or MassHealth in that AU or a related NPA AU; and
 - ◆ **System error** (insufficient data transfer from FMCS to PRISM II).
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**Worker
Responsibility**

Workers must review each case to determine if the month(s) in question should have accreted for the recipient. The month(s) should have accreted if the recipient:

- A. -was active and/or sanctioned for the entire month; **and**
- B. -was nonexempt for the entire month; **and either**
- C. -received a benefit greater than or equal to \$10, or would have received more than \$10 except for protective payments or recoupment, **or**
-participated in FEP or supported work.

Follow the 24-month clock specification details found in *PRISM II User's Guide*, Appendix C, to decide if the criteria for accretion were met for the month(s) in question.

Report Reason:

Action Required:

**Benefit less than
\$10**

Determine if the recipient would have received more than \$10 but for protective payments or recoupment; **or** participated in FEP or supported work. If so, the month(s) must be added.

Sanctioned

Determine if the recipient is still in the household. If so, the month(s) must be added. If not, change (overlay) the sanction action reason in block 89 to an appropriate closing action reason.

***Note:** PACES now allows closing action reasons to "overlay" on top of sanction action reasons. This means that, once the recipient is closed from the case, the sanction action reason will no longer appear on the PACES DEPD screen. Sanction history is maintained in PRISM II and can be seen on the Client Detail screen (Sanction Detail tab). When reopening a closed case / recipient, workers must remember to check PRISM II to see if the recipient has any prior sanctions.*

**Worker
Responsibility
(continued)**

Report Reason:

Action Required:

System Error

Check if the criteria for accretion were met for that month. If so, the month must be added.

Because a month(s) in question may go back as far as December 1996, careful and thorough research of the case record is required to make an accurate determination whether or not to add the month(s).

If necessary, complete a Recipient Financial History Inquiry form (PC-1A) to obtain a Classified Recipient Financial History report. Refer to *PACES User's Guide*, Chapter VIII, Other Reports, for details on this report.

The decision to accrete or not to accrete the month(s) must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor and referred to the director or assistant director for final approval and clock adjustment, if necessary.

**Director/Assistant
Director
Responsibility**

Directors or assistant directors must review all cases on the report and approve the decision to accrete or not to accrete the month(s). PRISM II clock adjustment privileges are restricted to directors and assistant directors. Annotate the exception report and ensure that a copy is filed in the case record.

Refer to *PRISM II User's Guide*, Chapter V, 24-Month Time Limited Benefits, for procedures for manual clock adjustments.

**Completion of
Manual
Adjustments**

All manual adjustments made as a result of this report must be completed by January 23, 1998. Directors must return the annotated reports to their regional directors no later than January 23, 1998.

Beginning in January, and quarterly thereafter, notices will be mailed to all active/sanctioned recipients affected by the time limits informing them of the status of their 24-month clocks.

PRISM II Alerts

Beginning January 1998, PRISM II will alert whenever it is unable to determine if a month should accrete. The alert will indicate the month in question and the reason it could not accrete. See *PRISM II User's Guide*, Chapter II, Alerts, and Appendix A, PRISM II Alert List, for more details on these new alerts.

TAFDC-9 Form

The TAFDC-9 (24-Month Clock Adjustment Review Form) has been developed to help the worker decide whether an adjustment to the 24-month clock is required. When a PRISM II clock-related alert appears, or a recipient requests an adjustment to his or her 24-month clock, the TAFDC-9 must be completed by the worker, signed and approved by *both* the supervisor and the director or assistant director, and filed in the case record.

Questions

If you have any questions about this memo, have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478 or Customer Support Services at (617) 348-5290.
