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Field Operations Memo 98-25
June 22, 1998

TO: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
FROM: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
RE: Assignment of Unique Numbers to All Applicants/Recipients

Background

Due to the implementation of PRISM II and in preparation for BEACON, the Department is changing the process for assigning identification numbers for recipients without social security numbers (SSNs).

When an individual without a social security number applies for assistance, a number is assigned to that individual by the Transitional Assistance Worker. Under current practice, this number is either:

- a unique facsimile number, beginning with 991-998, assigned sequentially according to Transitional Assistance Office region and number, and used for an applicant who is unable to obtain an SSN; or
- a dummy number, consisting of 999 followed by date of birth in MMDDYY form, and used for an applicant/recipient (usually a child) who is awaiting assignment of an SSN by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Dummy numbers are not unique in that individuals with the same date of birth share the same number.

Note: *DMA assigns unique Recipient Identification Numbers (RIDs), commonly known as "ZZ" numbers, to individuals with dummy numbers.*

Issue

PRISM II is a person-based system. Recipients added to the PRISM II database, then, must have a unique SSN. Since dummy numbers are not unique, recipients established on PACES with dummy numbers are not added to the PRISM II database. Furthermore, the transaction which changes the dummy number to a valid SSN on PACES is not picked up by PRISM II, as the recipient was never initially established on PRISM II.

PRISM II is the link through which data are transferred from PACES and FMCS to BEACON. Therefore, recipients unknown to the PRISM II database will also be unknown to BEACON.

Since dummy numbers are primarily assigned to children, the system's failure to add these children to PRISM II can result in incorrect alerting or nonalerting.

To address this issue, Systems staff have developed a method to provide unique numbers to all recipients established on PACES with dummy numbers.

Assignment of Unique Numbers to All Dependents with Dummy Numbers

A modification has been made to PACES to assign unique "999" numbers to all open or closed dependents who appear on PACES with dummy numbers. **On 6/29/98, all dummy "999" numbers for active or closed dependents will be replaced with unique "999" numbers on PACES.**

Note: This modification affects only dummy "999" numbers. Facsimile numbers (991-998), assigned to individuals unable to obtain SSNs, are not affected by this modification.

Effective 6/30/98, system-generated unique "999" numbers for these dependents will be displayed on the DEPD screen of PACES.

Note: Dependents assigned unique "999" numbers during this conversion will be added to the PRISM II and BEACON databases at the next monthly reconciliation. Reconciliation runs the second Wednesday of each month.

Establish New Dependents with No SSN Using Dummy Number 999-88-8888

Effective 6/29/98, when adding a dependent for whom an SSN has not yet been assigned, enter 999-88-8888 in block 83 of the PACES Input Document (PID). PACES will then assign a unique "999" number to that dependent. The unique number will appear on the DEPD screen the next day. The dependent will be added to the PRISM II and BEACON databases at the next monthly reconciliation. Thereafter, dependents added to PACES will be added to the PRISM II and BEACON databases daily.

Reminder: Unique "999" numbers are temporary numbers intended only for individuals awaiting assignment of SSNs by SSA. These numbers must be replaced with valid SSNs as soon as possible.

The Notification of Birth (NOB) Unit will also add newborns to PACES in this same manner.

Reopening Dependents with Unique "999" Numbers

When reopening a dependent with a unique "999" number:

- Reopen the dependent **and make no entry in block 83.** PACES will reopen the dependent using the same unique "999" number.
 - If the dependent now has a valid SSN, change the unique "999" number to the valid SSN **the next day. A two day process is required to ensure that PRISM II correctly picks up both the reopening and the SSN change.**
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Facsimile Number Assignment Process Unchanged

These procedures pertain only to the assignment of dummy numbers for individuals awaiting assignment of a valid SSN from SSA, and obsolete any procedures transmitted by previous memos. When assigning a facsimile number (991-998) to an applicant unable to obtain an SSN, follow current TAO procedures.

Questions

If you have any questions about this memo, have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at (617) 348-8478. Systems-related questions should be directed to the Customer Service Center at (617) 348-5290.
