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Field Operations Memo 2006-44
September 20, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations

Re: **Switching Group Home Residents from Bay State CAP to Regular FS**

Background

Due to a recent United States Department of Agriculture clarification, group home residents are no longer eligible to receive Bay State CAP benefits.

Approximately 398 group home residents must be switched from Bay State CAP benefits to regular FS benefits by September 30, 2006. On August 10, 2006, Group Home Managers were sent a letter from the Department notifying them of this change. The letter included information along with instructions to complete and return the *Other Agency Certification of Shelter Expenses for Licensed Group Home Residents* form to the Malden SSI Centralized Office for processing. The letter stated that:

- If the Group Home Manager completed and returned the form by September 8, 2006, the group home resident would be automatically switched to regular FS.
- If the Group Home Manager did not return the form by September 8, 2006, the AU would close at the end of September. A new FS Application would be required to re-establish FS benefits.

All group home cases will be transferred out of the Malden Centralized SSI Office as part of this project.

Purpose of Memo

This Field Operations Memo discusses the impact of this change on TAO staff and provides AU Manager instructions for processing these AUs as well as error rate implications.

Impact on TAO Staff

Malden SSI Centralized staff will review all FS-ACSE forms for completeness.

*Heating/Cooling
SUA*

Malden SSI Centralized staff will process FS-ACSE forms which indicate that the group home resident pays heating/cooling costs separately from rent by:

- Entering the new shelter information into BEACON. BEACON will then recalculate the FS benefit and automatically switch the AU to regular FS since the FS benefits will be higher than the Bay State CAP benefit;
- Establishing a two year certification period; and
- Transferring the AU to the appropriate TAO.

No AU Manager action is required at this time.

No SUA

Malden SSI Centralized staff will forward to Central Office/FS Unit for follow-up and processing FS-ACSE forms which indicate that the group home resident does not pay utilities.

These AUs will be recertified centrally based on known SSA information along with verified shelter expenses.

- If there is no history of earned income based on SDX information, the AU will be certified for one year.
- If there is a history of earnings on SDX, the AU will be certified for three months so that the AU Manager can conduct a mail/telephone interview to update earnings information.

The following entry will be made in the BEACON Narratives tab to identify these centrally processed AUs: *Central Office Project - USDA Clarification Group Home Switch to Regular FS. Recertified based on SDX information and FS-ACSE form.*

These AUs will be transferred to the appropriate TAO.

No AU Manager action is required at this time.

Error Rate Implications

The majority of the group home residents were established on Bay State CAP as a result of Phase II Outreach in Fall 2005. With the exception of shelter expenses, information on these AUs comes directly from SSA. Since SSA is a trusted source this information is considered verified. However, the information received on the FS-ACSE form must be entered correctly for the AU to remain error free during the certification period.

Questions

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