

**Procedural Standard 01-3
September 6, 2006**

TO: All DES Staff

FR: Katherine Edwards, Acting Director, Disability Evaluation Services

BY: Sherry Campanelli, Program Compliance Manager

RE: **Consultative Examination (CE) Preference** Calls

Purpose: This guideline describes the purpose for determining the client's preference (s) regarding attendance at Consultative Examinations.

Background: In the absence of sufficient medical evidence from a client's own medical sources, the Disability Evaluation Services (DES) requests additional consultative examination(s) as needed to assure full consideration of the client's application for MassHealth and/or the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) programs based on disability. In order to provide the client with the most expeditious disability decision, careful coordination of the client's availability with the scheduled CE appointment and with arrangements for other supportive services (transportation and/or interpreter services) is critical.

Ongoing administrative attention is paid to this issue in order to assure the client's attendance at a CE and to avoid rescheduling if at all possible. Initially at application time, the client is asked by MassHealth and/or DTA to declare over his/her signature on the Disability Supplement a preference, if any, for CE appointments in terms of the time of day and day(s) of the week.

Once the case is in process in DES and a CE is requested, the Disability Assistant (DA) speaks with the client by phone to update and/or reconfirm the client's preferences for the CE appointment scheduling. Preferences for morning or afternoon and specific days of the week are honored whenever possible; however DES does not guarantee an appointment according to client's preferences.

In addition to identifying any scheduling conflicts that might interfere with client's attendance at the CE, the preference call *also* represents an opportunity to explain the purpose of a CE in the disability evaluation process as well as the importance of the client keeping the appointment and the consequences of non-attendance (decision will be made based on the evidence in file). The preference call contact is also a chance to identify potential barriers to attendance or participation such as the need for transportation and/or for an interpreter.

Procedure: Preference calls are made in the client's primary/preferred language by the DA using an approved telephonic interpretation service if needed. The DA

documents the results of preference calls in DEScovery. Specific step-by-step technical instructions for using the DEScovery function designed for this purpose as well as preference call scripts; call-in letters for clients unable to be reached by phone; and handling of special situations such as those involving legal and/or eligibility representatives, homeless or deceased clients, clients whose whereabouts is unknown or who are incarcerated are maintained by the Administrative Supervisor, Night Shift.

Summary: DES makes every effort to assure that the CE process is convenient for clients so that they are able to attend their scheduled appointment(s) and in turn have the opportunity to have their disability applications fully evaluated.