



DATE: June 30, 2014

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #14-06-02
Medicaid

SUBJECT: Expedited Processing of Medical Assistance Applications for Inmates Being Released From County Prisons and Immediately Being Transferred to a Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Tom Strickler
Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To provide policy and procedures for expedited processing of Medical Assistance (MA) applications for inmates being released from county prisons and immediately being transferred to a Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility. The Single County Authority (SCA) will coordinate treatment for the inmate. SCAs are the county program offices that administrate drug and alcohol services.

BACKGROUND

Certain inmates have need for residential substance abuse treatment immediately upon release from prison. In some circumstances, treatment is included as a condition of release. The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and the Department of Public Welfare (DPW), along with SCAs, have collaborated to create a process to ensure that MA benefits will be in place for this population upon release, with the SCAs arranging transportation directly from the county prison to a Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility. This process began as a pilot project in Armstrong and Clarion Counties in December 2012, and has since been rolled out to Indiana, Lycoming, Clinton, Berks, and Dauphin Counties. The pilot has been highly successful and received a 2013 COMCARE HealthChoices Award for County Collaboration.

DISCUSSION

In general terms, the process will begin when an individual's release date from the county prison is established. At that point, a representative from the SCA will visit the prison and assist the individual with filling out and submitting a COMPASS application along with required documentation. A PA 1663 must be submitted for any individual with a permanent disability. A PA 1672 must be submitted for all inmates who are being released to a Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility. The SCA is also responsible for obtaining a Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility bed for

the individual. The application will be sent to the CAO in the individual's county of residence. Upon receipt, the CAO will process the application and, if the individual is eligible, authorize MA no sooner than seven days prior to the individual's estimated release date from the County Prison **using the release date as the begin date**. This process will require close cooperation and frequent communication between all parties involved. The SCA will serve as the main liaison between the county prison, the inmate and the CAO.

PROCEDURES

Implementation of this process requires actions by the SCA and DPW staff:

SCA

- Meet with inmate to fill out paperwork and collect necessary documentation (including a [PA 1672](#) for all individuals and a [PA 1663](#) for all disabled individuals).
- Submit the application through COMPASS as a community partner.
 - In order to have the application route to the correct CAO, enter the individual's permanent residence address in the application address field.
 - Scan and attach all necessary documentation.
 - Place a note in comment section stating: "For expedited determination of MA eligibility for inmate being released to a Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility".
 - When possible, submit the application no sooner than 30 days before the individual's release date and no later than 5 days prior to the individual's release date.
- Indicate estimated release date.
- Immediately contact CAO if any change to release date is expected or occurs.
- Notify the CAO when treatment is completed.

CAO

Upon receipt of the COMPASS application, the Income Maintenance Caseworker (IMCW) will:

- Review the application information, including any accompanying verification.
- Ensure receipt and accurate completion of the appropriate form (PA 1663 and PA 1672 (if inmate is permanently disabled), or PA 1672 only).
- Determine eligibility in the appropriate category (IMCW must review first for permanent disability and, if eligible, open in federal category such as Healthy Horizons).
- If the individual is eligible, authorize **ongoing** (not an NCE) MA no sooner than seven days prior to the individual's release date from the county prison **using the estimated release date as the begin date**. An alert should be set to review the case five days from the date set for release from the Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility. In the event that the SCA, for whatever reason, has been unable to contact the CAO, this alert will serve as a reminder that the case will soon require action.
- Send notices to the individual, the SCA, the Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility and the county prison.
- When the individual's treatment is completed, the SCA is responsible for notifying the CAO. The IMCW will evaluate for ongoing eligibility.

NOTE: This is not a process to provide retroactive coverage. These applications are processed prospectively. The Behavioral Health Managed Care begins on the date of release from incarceration, which is the eligibility begin date.

NOTE: Applications for this pilot should not be confused with applications for inmates' inpatient hospital services (see [OPS111002](#) and [OPS110803](#)). Those applications should continue to be forwarded to the Central Unit for processing.

NEXT STEPS

1. Review this Information Memorandum with appropriate staff.
2. Contact your Area Manager if you have any questions.

Attachments

[PA 1663](#)

[PA 1672](#)

[PA Association of County Drug and Alcohol Administrators Quick Reference](#)