

Operations Memorandum

Long Term Care OPS081205

SUBJECT: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Increase Affecting Long Term Care (LTC) Budgets Effective January 1, 2009

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Joanne Glover, Director, Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To provide County Assistance Offices (CAOs) with information regarding the COLA increase for LTC, effective January 1, 2009.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The Social Security Administration announced its COLA increases for January 1, 2009. The Railroad Retirement Board, and the Veterans Administration will announce their COLA increases for 2009 at a later date and these increases will be published prior to January 1, 2009. The increase for Black Lung recipients will be released at a later date.

Effective January 1, 2009, the COLA increase for recipients of Retirement, Survivor's or Disability Insurance (RSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) will be 5.8 percent, causing the following changes:

	2008	2009	State Supplement
SSI Benefit			
Individual	\$664.40	\$701.40	\$27.40
Couple	\$999.70	\$1,054.70	\$43.70
Domiciliary Care			
Individual	\$1,071.30	\$1,108.30	\$434.30
Couple	\$1,903.40	\$1,958.40	\$947.40
Personal Care Home			
Individual	\$1,076.30	\$1,113.30	\$439.30
Couple	\$1,913.40	\$1,968.40	\$957.40

Effective January 1, 2009, the Medicare Part B premium will remain the same as follows:

2008	2009
\$96.40	\$96.40

The Non-Money Payment SSI-related Special Gross Monthly Income Limit, which applies to applicants and individuals already receiving LTC or Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), is:

2008	2009
\$1,911	\$2,022

Spousal Impoverishment for determining spousal share is:

	2008	2009
Minimum Resource Standard	\$20,880	\$21,912
Maximum Resource Standard	\$104,400	\$109,560

The Maximum Monthly Maintenance Needs Allowance plus Excess Shelter Cost Limit is:

2008	2009
\$2,610	\$2,739

The Home Maintenance Deduction is \$701.40 (six-month limit)

Monthly Personal Needs Allowances (PNA) are:

	2008	2009
Long-Term Care Facility	\$45	\$45
Personal Care Home	\$60	\$60
Domiciliary Care Home	\$157.30	\$172.30

LONG-TERM CARE COLA PROCESSING

Automated COLA adjustments for LTC recipients will be made on January 4, 2009.

Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits (code 12) will be updated on all LTC facility cases. The COLA is completely automated for cases with only SSA benefits or cases with SSA benefits and any or all of the following income: interest income (code 23), fixed pensions (code 50), and/or earned income (codes 01, 02, 03, 04, 07 and 99). No further action is required by the CAO for these cases.

The Income Maintenance Caseworker (IMCW) will receive alerts for any cases that have not been completed by the automated COLA process. The alerts will notify the IMCW of the reason that the case could not be processed automatically.

As a reminder cases income coded as adjustable pensions (code 20) will be alerted out at COLA. Any pensions that do not change should be coded as a fixed pension (code 50) in the system. By correcting the income codes the number of alerts received at COLA will be minimized.

The actual COLA updates to cases with other income types cannot be made by the IMCW until after the automated COLA run is completed on January 4, 2009. All COLA Advance Notices generated for cases with program status code 80 or 00 should be completed in the Client Information System (CIS) by January 16, 2009. Any COLA Advance Notice that affects the cost of care for the month of January must be completed in CIS no later than January 16, 2009 unless processing the COLA adjustment would end Buy-in eligibility for the individual. Alerted cases with a program status code 66 should not be processed until after the 2009 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIGs) are updated so that eligibility for Buy-In is processed using the 2009 Buy-In limits. A Daily Status will be issued once the FPIGs are updated. Until FPIGs are updated in the system, CAOs should only process COLA alerts on cases with program status codes of 80 or 00.

NEXT STEPS

1. Share this information with appropriate staff.
2. Send the appropriate notice for changes that are a result of the COLA reviews.
3. Direct all questions to your Area Manager.