



DATE: December 4, 2015

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #15-12-03

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: Inez Titus
Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To provide updated 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 (RTF). 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 Human Services (DHS), along with the 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 RTF.

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. An Employability Assessment Form ([PA 1663](#)) must be submitted for any individual with a permanent disability. A Drug and Alcohol Treatment Information Form ([PA 1672](#)) may be submitted for any individual being released to a RTF and must be submitted for inmates who are lawful permanent residents (LPRs) subject to the five-year bar. The SCA is responsible for obtaining a

RTF bed for the individual. Upon receipt, the County Assistance Office (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 MA begin date. This process will require close cooperation and frequent communication between all parties. 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 DHS staff:

SCA

1. Meet with inmate to complete paperwork and collect necessary documentation, including a [PA 1663](#) for all disabled individuals. If the PA 1663 indicates the individual will be disabled for a period of twelve (12) months or longer, a Disability Advocacy Program (DAP) Referral Form ([PA 731](#)) will be completed and signed by the individual.
2. A [PA 1672](#) may be completed for any individual, and must be completed for LPRs subject to the five-year-bar who do not meet General Assistance (GA) related MA criteria such as having a disability and/or a need for a health-sustaining medication.
3. Submit the application through COMPASS as a community partner.
 - When possible, submit the application no sooner than fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the individual's release date and no later than five (5) calendar days prior to the individual's release date.
 - To ensure the application is routed to the correct CAO, use the individual's permanent residence address. If the individual is homeless and does not have an established mailing address, the CAO address may be used. The individual should be instructed to report any address change to the CAO.
 - Scan and attach all necessary documentation.
 - Include the following in the application comment section:
 - A statement indicating that the application is "For expedited determination of MA eligibility for inmate being released to RTF".
 - Indicate the individual's estimated release date.

4. Immediately contact the CAO if any change to the release date is expected or occurs.
5. Notify the CAO when treatment is completed.

CAO

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

1. Review the application information, including any accompanying verification.
2. Ensure receipt and accurate completion of the PA 1663 and [PA 731](#) if the inmate is permanently disabled.
3. Determine eligibility in the appropriate MA category. The IMCW must review first for permanent disability and, if eligible, open the individual in a Healthy Horizons category and forward the completed PA 731 to the DAP advocate. If the applicant does not return a PA 1663 indicating a disability, the IMCW will review eligibility for MA in a MAGI/non-MAGI category which does not require a disability.
4. If the individual is eligible, authorize **ongoing**, not non-continuous eligibility (NCE), MA in eCIS no sooner than seven days prior to the individual's release date from the county prison. The IMCW will:
 - Enter the individual's release date as the MA begin date on the Program Request screen.
 - Check the drug/alcohol indicator on the Individual Attributes screen.
 - Enter 'yes' to a facility on the Non-Financial Questions screen.
 - Complete the Facility Placement screen with the appropriate Drug and Alcohol (D&A) facility code and the estimated release date as the facility begin date.
5. Set an alert to review the case five days from the scheduled date of release from the RTF. In the event that the SCA has been unable to contact the CAO, this alert will serve as a reminder that the case will soon require action.
6. Send notices to the individual, the SCA, the RTF and the county prison.
7. When the individual's treatment is completed, the SCA is responsible for notifying the CAO. The IMCW will evaluate the individual for ongoing eligibility.

NOTE: The nine (9) month lifetime limit for active drug and alcohol treatment in a licensed facility under 55 Pa Code 141.61(c)(1)(v) is no longer applicable unless the individual is a LPR subject to the five-year-bar. LPRs must meet the GA-related MA requirements found in the Medical Assistance Eligibility Handbook (MAEH) sections 305.4 and 322.32.

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

NOTE: Applications for this process should not be confused with applications for county prison inmates' inpatient hospital services (see OPS111002). Those applications should continue to be forwarded to the Central Unit for processing.

NEXT STEPS

1. Review this Operations Memorandum with appropriate staff.
2. Contact your Area Manager if you have any questions.
3. OPS14-06-02 becomes obsolete with the issuance of this Operations Memorandum.

Attachments

[PA 1672](#)

[PA 1663](#)

[PA 731](#)

[PA Association of County Drug and Alcohol Administrators Membership Directory](#)