

# Operations Memorandum - Medicaid - Cash Assistance OPS110201

**SUBJECT:** Process to Obtain Birth Record Verification from Puerto Rico's Demographic Registry Office for Proof of U.S. Citizenship  
**TO:** Executive Directors  
**FROM:** Lourdes Padilla , Acting Director, Bureau of Operations

## **Purpose**

To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) of a new process to request birth record verification from Puerto Rico's Demographic Registry Office for new applicants who were born in Puerto Rico and who do not have proof of United States (U.S.) citizenship for Medical Assistance (MA). This process becomes effective with the posting of this Operations Memorandum.

## **Background**

As referenced in [OPS100803](#), the Government of Puerto Rico began issuing new, more secure birth certificates on July 1, 2010. As of October 30, 2010, Puerto Rican birth certificates issued before July 1, 2010 are now invalid.

New birth certificates may only be issued to the person to whom the birth record applies. Puerto Rico-born individuals are required to pay a fee for the new birth certificates. However, Federal or State government agencies may now obtain verification of birth for official purposes free of charge. The birth record verification is considered proof of U.S. citizenship for MA purposes.

## **Discussion**

CAOs may only request birth record verification from Puerto Rico's Demographic Registry Office for individuals who meet the following conditions:

- the individual previously applied for MA but never provided valid verification of U.S. citizenship or the individual applies for MA for the first time after October 31, 2010;
- the individual failed the MCI/SSA interface used to verify U.S. citizenship and identity (see [OPS100602](#)); and
- the individual has no other proof of U.S. citizenship, such as a new Puerto Rican birth certificate issued on or after July 1, 2010 (see MAEH [322.21](#) for a complete list of documents considered acceptable for proof of U.S. citizenship).

As illustrated in the examples provided in OPS100803, for a past or current recipient who provided a birth certificate issued prior to July 1, 2010 before it became invalid on

October 30, 2010, no additional verification is required. This process should not be used for individuals that have past, acceptable verification in their case records. Some individuals may have provided a U.S. Passport to document citizenship. Any unexpired passport presented by a new applicant should continue to be accepted. However, an expired passport issued to a person born in Puerto Rico should not be accepted for a new applicant.

**NOTE:** For Cash Assistance, if a birth certificate is the only documentation that can be obtained to verify age, then the process below should be followed.

### **Process to Request Birth Verification from Puerto Rico:**

1. Birth verification requests must include the name of the individual as it appeared on the birth certificate including both last names if the individual uses more than one last name, date of birth, and place of birth (town/hospital). This information (with the exception of the hospital) may be collected on the most current version of the PA 600 or the PA 1809. Missing information should be collected from the individual.
2. Once collected, the required information should be entered on the [form letter](#) requesting birth verification (see Attachment). The form letter must be printed on CAO letterhead to be **faxed** to Puerto Rico's Demographic Registry.
3. A CAO fax cover sheet and the completed form letter are to be **faxed** to the attention of: Validation Office; fax numbers: 1(787)767-8605 or 1(787)766-1299.
4. The Validation Office will use the information included in the form letter to search their birth records database.
  - a. The Validation Office is expected to provide findings within two business days.
  - b. The findings will either confirm and validate the demographic information submitted to the office or advise that the information submitted is not consistent with the information in the Demographic Registry Office.
5. Puerto Rico's Validation Office may return findings either by fax or email. (When completing the request form letter, the CAO caseworker indicates how the response should be sent.)

6. Birth verification returned to the CAO may include the individual's full name, date and place of birth, and an official stamp from the Puerto Rico Department of Healthcare Demographic Registry Office.
  - a. This birth verification response is not an actual birth certificate, but it is acceptable as proof of U.S. citizenship for MA.
  - b. If an individual needs a new, more secure birth certificate for other personal reasons, he or she must send for his or her own birth certificate.
7. The birth verification received from Puerto Rico must be included in the individual's case record.

If the Validation Office advises that the information submitted is not consistent with the information in the Demographic Registry Office, the CAO should contact the individual to confirm the information. If the information is incorrect, a corrected form letter should be **faxed** to the Validation Office. If the information provided was correct, then the CAO must follow up with the individual in order to obtain another type of document to verify U.S. citizenship.

The process outlined above is new. Puerto Rico's Demographic Registry is handling a higher-than-usual volume of work as they issue new, more secure birth certificates. As this process begins, it may take more than two business days for a response. If seven business days pass and no response is received, send a second request. If no response is received for the second request after an additional seven business days, please notify the Bureau of Policy's Policy Clarification Unit that no response has been returned from Puerto Rico's Validation Office.

### **Next Steps**

1. Share and review this information with appropriate staff members.
2. Direct questions regarding this Operations Memorandum to your Area Manager.
3. This Operations Memorandum will become obsolete when this information is incorporated into the Handbooks.