

Policy Clarifications – Medicaid

PMA 18782-304

Submitted: 12/17

Agency: CAOs

Subject: Processing Shortened Medical Assistance (MA) Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services (COMPASS) Applications for Individuals Being Released from Correctional Facilities

Question: 1.) How soon should the County Assistance Office (CAO) process MA applications for individuals being released from correctional facilities?
2.) Can an application be signed by staff of the correctional facility?

Response By: Division of Health Services

Date: 12/20/17

- 1.) Shortened MA COMPASS applications for individuals being released from incarceration **must be processed prior to the release date listed on the application**. They should be reviewed and processed as soon as possible by the CAOs.

Reviewing these applications as soon as possible and processing before the release date is an extremely important goal for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Corrections (DOC) have been working together to ensure released individuals are authorized for MA and provided with their Recipient Identification Number (RID) before release so they have access to healthcare coverage upon release. Studies have shown that access to healthcare coverage decreases the likelihood that released individuals will be re-incarcerated.

Correctional facilities have been advised to submit MA release applications through COMPASS 15 days prior to the individual's release date. Due to system limitations, when a correctional facility submits the application more than 15 days prior to the individual's release date listed on the application, the CAO must wait until the system date is within 15 days of the release date to process the application.

Reminder: The CAO will use the release date as the MA begin date.

- 2.) Yes, applications e-Signed or physically signed by a correctional facility staff person meet the requirement of an application signature. The CAO should not request an additional signature from the applicant.

Example: The CAO receives an MA inmate release application for Mr. Smith from SCI Camp Hill on December 7. Mr. Smith's release date is December 20. The application is e-Signed by the SCI Camp Hill staff person and there is nothing on the application or in Mr. Smith's case record that requires verification prior to processing the application. As the release date is within 15 days from the system date, the CAO will process this application as soon as possible with an MA begin date of December 20 so Mr. Smith has MA benefits when he leaves the facility.

For more detailed steps on how to process MA inmate release applications, please review [OPS 161105](#).