**DATE: August 22, 2018**

**OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM # 18-08-04**

**SUBJECT:** Reinstatement of Medical Assistance (MA) Benefits for MG99 Recipients Who Have Been Released from Incarceration

**TO:**  Executive Directors

**FROM:** Inez Titus

Director

Bureau of Operations

**PURPOSE**

To provide policy and procedures for the reinstatement of MA benefits when a recipient is released from incarceration, without requiring a new application for benefits.

**BACKGROUND**

Many inmates, particularly those with serious mental or physical health conditions, require essential health care upon release from incarceration. In order to improve the continuity of care for this population, the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) have collaborated to create a process to ensure that MA benefits will be in place for inmates on the date of release from incarceration. This includes reinstating MA coverage upon release without the receipt of a new application from the individual or correctional facility.

**DISCUSSION**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued guidance that a new application must not be required to reopen MA benefits for incarcerated individuals in suspended status (MG99) upon their release. Instead, MA benefits will be reinstated once the County Assistance Office (CAO) is notified that the individual will be/has been released.

The shortened Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services (COMPASS) MA Inmate Release application will continue to be submitted by some correctional facilities, mainly State Correctional Institutions (SCIs) and Community Corrections Centers (CCCs)/Contract Facilities. For applications received, the CAOs will continue to reopen MA benefits for MG99 recipients following the current process outlined in [OPS 16-11-05](http://mydhs/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_249416.docx) and [PMA 18505-392](http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/ma/PMA18505392.docx). However, in instances where the CAO is notified of the MG99 recipient’s release and there is no application, an application will no longer be required.

**PROCEDURES**

Processing an MG99 Manual Closure to Open MA When Notified of Release:

1. The CAO is notified of an individual’s release from incarceration. Notification may be received by contact from the individual or correctional facility, including: a telephone call, office visit, change center ticket, or Exchange 10 hit.

* If release notification is received from the individual, take the individual’s statement of the release date. Enter the release date as the discharge date on the facility placement screen.
* If release notification is received through an Exchange 10 hit, verify the release date by contacting the correctional facility.

**REMINDER:** The CAO does not need to verify Exchange 10 hits from source “DOCS-JNET.” Exchange hits from this source are considered verified upon receipt for all benefits and no further follow-up is required by the CAO.

1. Reopen the individual’s MA before the release date, if possible. When reopening before the release date, obtain an A# and access the MG99 record through Program Add. This is a two-step process:
2. Change the existing MA benefits on the Program Request screen to ‘No.’
3. Select ‘MA’ under Program, ‘Yes’ under Process, and a begin date equal to the release date.
4. If notification is received after the release date, reopen as soon as possible and access the MG99 record through Case Maintenance.

**NOTE:** If opening after the release date, the MA begin date will be the date the CAO runs maintenance on the case. If there is a medical need, the CAO can open MA back to the date of service using the current retroactive MA rules (no earlier than first day of the third month prior to the notification date), but no earlier than the release date. The worker will then need to request an A# and process a Non-Continuous Eligibility (NCE) for the applicable retroactive period.

1. If the mailing address on the Household screen is the correctional facility’s address, update it to match the residence address that is in the system or update it to the address the client reports they are living at if it is different than the residence address in the system.

**IMPORTANT:** If the household is open for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the CAO should not remove the SNAP exclusion code for the released individual on the Individual Program Request screen unless client contact has been made. Additionally, a new application is required before adding the individual to an existing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) case.

1. Navigate to the ‘Facility Placement’ screen and end date the facility record by entering the discharge date and discharge code of ‘01 – Routine Discharge.’
2. Run eligibility. The MG99 budget will be closed and the individual will be opened in a new MA budget, if eligible. The system will default the MG99 closure notice to Reason Code 914, Option B.
3. Update the renewal date as needed:

* If the individual is returning to a multiple person household, align their MA renewal date with the renewal date of the other MA budgets.
* If the individual is a single person household, update the renewal date so that it is the original MG99 renewal date.

**NOTE:** If the renewal date field is not editable, the CAO should submit a ServiceNow ticket.

1. Submit the case. The individual will be evaluated for MA again at next renewal or next reported change.

If an MA Inmate Release application is received, the CAO will continue to process it through Program Add or Case Open instead of accessing the case through maintenance. This will ensure the correctional facility is correctly notified of the individual’s eligibility. On the Program Request screen, the CAO will use an MA begin date equal to the release date if the application is submitted before or on the release date. For applications submitted after the release date, the CAO will use the application date as the begin date. If an individual submits an application on their own, the CAO will process it following usual procedures and send the appropriate eligibility notice.

**NEXT STEPS**

1. Review this Operations Memorandum with appropriate staff.

2. Contact your Area Manager if you have any questions.