



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111

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Operations Memo 2011-55 A
December 14, 2011

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

From: *Stephanie Brown*, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Re: TAFDC, EAEDC, SNAP – Changes to Reevaluation Process: Phase One

Background

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires DTA to close SNAP cases at the end of their recertification period if a recertification has not been completed prior to the closing date. To that end, effective November 21, 2011, the Department changed Reevaluation functionality on BEACON for all cash cases (EAEDC and TAFDC) with SNAP cases.

This change included:

- automated closings for PA SNAP cases that have not been reevaluated before their recertification period has come to an end;
Note: Automated TAFDC and EAEDC case closings are not part of this change.
- modifications to BEACON functionality ensuring that reevaluation dates are not extended for any cash or SNAP case without a reevaluation being completed; and
- procedural changes.

Important: This process also applies to the Fall River Centralized TAFDC office. The NPA SNAP-only, PA SSI and Bay State CAP reevaluation processes are not impacted by this process except that these cases will not be able to have their recertification dates extended without a reevaluation being completed.

Purpose of Memo

This Operations Memo is being issued with corrections to Operations Memo 2011-55 and a Q and A developed from training sessions.

Notice

A notice (Attachment A) was sent to all cash clients with an associated PA SNAP case during the week of November 14 informing them of the upcoming change in the reevaluation process.

**BEACON
Changes:
Tracking
Cash/SNAP
Reevaluations**

Effective with BEACON Build 44.5 the following changes occurred:

- All cash cases with a SNAP case (PA or NPA) were assigned to and processed by the cash case manager. These cases were automatically reassigned on the evening of November 18, 2011.
- The cash (TAFDC and EAEDC) reevaluation end date and the associated SNAP (PA or NPA) reevaluation end date were automatically aligned on BEACON on the evening of November 18, 2011. This means that reevaluation end dates for cash cases are based on the SNAP cyclical end date. The realignment is based on the following rules:
 - A. If the SNAP Reevaluation End Date is earlier than 12/15/11, and a SNAP Recertification Form was not sent to the client, and the case does not have an Initiated Reevaluation, or has a Reevaluation that was initiated more than 60 days in the past, then the SNAP Reevaluation End Dates will be advanced to the appropriate first cyclical date (minus 1 day) in the months of February, March or April based on an equal distribution of changed cases within a case manager's caseload.
 - B. If an Active Cash case does not have an Initiated Reevaluation, or has a Reevaluation that was initiated more than 60 days in the past, and has an associated Active SNAP case, the Cash Reevaluation End Date will be changed to the same date as the Active SNAP case's Reevaluation End Date.
 - C. If an Active Cash case does not have an Initiated Reevaluation, or has a Reevaluation that was initiated more than 60 days in the past, and does not have an associated Active SNAP case, BEACON will find the first cyclical date (minus 1 day) equal to or after the Reevaluation End Date. If the Cash Reevaluation End Date is earlier than 12/15/11, then the date will be advanced to the appropriate first cyclical date (minus 1 day) in the months of February, March or April based on an equal distribution of changed cases within a case manager's caseload.
 - D. If an Active Cash case has an initiated Reevaluation within the last 60 days, the Cash Reevaluation End Date will be changed to cyclical dates (minus 1 day) within the Reevaluation End month.

Note: We are aware that some data is missing from the Reevaluation Status Report and the Reevaluation Due View. Some Initiate dates and Appointment dates are blank. This will be corrected in a future data fix. You will be notified when this occurs.

**BEACON
Changes:
Tracking
Cash/SNAP
Reevaluations
(continued)**

- A Notice of Expiration (Attachment B) and Prefilled SNAP Reevaluation form will be automatically mailed to PA SNAP cases 45 days before the Reevaluation End Date (this process mirrors the NPA SNAP process).
 - Clients whose PA SNAP Reevaluation End Date expires without a reevaluation having been completed will be automatically closed by BEACON.
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**BEACON
Changes:
Supporting the
Cash/SNAP
Reevaluation
Process**

Effective with BEACON Build 44.5 the following changes also occurred:

- Several appointment letters were renamed and modified and a telephone appointment letter was added for cash (TAFDC and EAEDC) cases.
 - The NOMI for Applications were modified and a new NOMI for SNAP Recertification was added to the Letter Request page. The NOMI for SNAP Recertification icon was also added to the Reevaluations Due view. The NOMI for SNAP Recertification automatically populates with an interview and verifications due date that is ten days from the day the NOMI is generated. The NOMI for application continues to automatically populate with a due date for an interview and verifications that is 30 days from the date of application.
 - An Appointment Sent Date column was added to the Reevaluation Due view.
 - Cash reevaluation Types listed on the Reevaluation page (Home Visit Reevaluation, Mail-in Reevaluation, Teen Parent Home Visit Reeval, Teen Parent Reevaluation and Telephone Reevaluation) were eliminated. The only reevaluation Type remaining for cash programs is “Reevaluation.”
 - A hard edit was placed on the Reevaluation End Date field on the Updates tab of the Interview Wrapup EBC Results page ensuring that cash and/or SNAP reevaluation dates cannot be extended without a reevaluation being completed.
Note: The only exception to this hard edit rule is the Special 30-day Expedited NPA SNAP cases. Only TAO managers will have the ability to override the hard edit for extraordinary circumstances.
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**BEACON
Changes:
Supporting the
Cash/SNAP
Reevaluation
Process
(continued)**

- The Reevaluation Due view was moved to the Daily Priority Actions group of views. The view displays an icon designed to automatically send the NOMI for SNAP Recertification to the appropriate client, once the case manager clicks on the icon.
 - The Reevaluation in Progress view was eliminated with all of its information moved to the Reevaluation Due view. Clients are removed from this view if the case closes or if there are new reevaluation dates entered.
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**BEACON
Changes:
Miscellaneous
Changes**

Effective with BEACON Build 44.5 the following changes also occurred:

- A VC-1 Due Date column was added to the Reevaluation Due view.
 - If the RFA or Reinstatement workflow is selected and the cash case has an associated SNAP case whose Reevaluation End Date is within 45 days of the current date, a pop-up message will be displayed at the Request for Assistance or Reinstatement workflow advising the case manager that a reevaluation is due for SNAP (either PA or NPA) for the selected client. The message will read: “A reevaluation must be completed for the FS AU within this household within the next 45 days. Please complete the FS reevaluation when processing this RFA or Reinstatement.”
 - Once a cash case is approved, any associated SNAP case will be automatically assigned to the cash case manager.
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New and Revised Appointment Letters

Effective with BEACON Build 44.5, new telephone appointment letters have been added to the Type dropdown list of the Schedule Appointment page. Some existing appointment letters have been renamed to accurately reflect their use as telephone versus in-office interview appointment letters. The new and revised appointment letters ensure that applicants and clients receive proper notification for appointments. Case managers must use the appropriate appointment letter for each circumstance.

New Appointment Letters	Existing Appointment Letters Revised or Renamed
	<p>Food Stamp Application Food Stamp Appointment Letter for an In-Office Interview (used for Application In-Office Interview)</p> <p>Food Stamp Appointment Letter for a Telephone Interview (used for Application Telephone Interview)</p>
<p>Case Maintenance Telephone Appointment Interview for Case Maintenance (used for Case Maintenance Telephone Interview /Any Program)</p>	<p>Case Maintenance Case Maintenance Appointment Notice (used for Case Maintenance In-Office Interview/Any Program)</p>
<p>EAEDC Reevaluation Telephone Appointment for EAEDC Reevaluation Interview (used for Reevaluation Telephone Interview)</p>	<p>EAEDC Reevaluation Notice of Reevaluation Appointment/EAEDC (used for Reevaluation In-Office Interview)</p>
<p>FS Reevaluation Telephone Appointment for FS Reevaluation Interview (used for Reevaluation Telephone Interview)</p>	<p>FS Reevaluation Notice of Reevaluation Appointment/FS (used for Reevaluation In-Office Interview)</p>
<p>TAFDC Reevaluation Telephone Appointment for TAFDC Reevaluation Interview (used for Reevaluation Telephone Interview)</p>	<p>TAFDC Reevaluation Notice of Reevaluation Appointment/TAFDC (used for Reevaluation In-Office Interview)</p>
<p>Notice of Missed Interview for SNAP Recertification</p>	<p>Notice of Missed Interview for SNAP Application</p>

Important: If case managers are sending a reevaluation appointment for one program (for example, TAFDC) and another program (for example, SNAP) needs a reevaluation within 31 days of the first program, the second program will be automatically added to the appointment letter.

Case Manager Responsibilities

Beginning November 21, 2011, case managers' responsibilities for conducting the reevaluation process for cash and SNAP cases are as follows (steps that are new with this process are noted in parentheses after the appropriate steps):

- Reevaluations due within the next 60 days will appear on the Reevaluations Due view.
 - If there is an associated SNAP case, a Notice of Expiration and a Prefilled SNAP Reevaluation form will be automatically mailed by BEACON 45 days before the Reevaluation End Date listed on the view (new with this process).
Note: A copy of the notice which is the first page of the SNAP Reevaluation form will be located in the Document History tab.
 - Case managers must look at the Reevaluations Due view daily to determine which appointments need to be scheduled (based on the Notice of Expiration and the Prefilled SNAP Reevaluation form being sent). This view will also have an indicator stating that a reevaluation form has been sent and the date it was sent. Once the appointment has been scheduled, that date will also be listed.
Note: Cash-only cases will not have the indicator stating that a reevaluation form has been sent, but must be scheduled for appointments as well.
 - Case managers must schedule a reevaluation interview for cash and SNAP based on the SNAP Reevaluation Due End Date, scheduling the client whose end date is soonest first.
Note: Scheduling clients in this way will ensure that a client's PA SNAP benefits will continue uninterrupted.
 - Appointments for all cases on the view must be created and mailed the week that a client's name appears on the Reevaluations Due view with a form Sent date. The appointments should be scheduled for the following week. This will allow enough time for the case manager to complete the reevaluation process even if the client reschedules the interview appointment (new with this process).
Reminder: Case managers must allow appropriate amount of time for mailing, delivery and receipt of appointment letters.
Note: Case managers may schedule an entire month of reevaluations at this time.
 - Reevaluation interviews should be conducted telephonically unless:
 - ✓ a face-to-face interview is requested by the client or their authorized representative,
 - ✓ the client doesn't have a phone,
 - ✓ the case is coded with a heightened level of security,
 - ✓ the exemption status changes,
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**Case Manager
Responsibilities
(continued)**

- ✓ the client has used 22 months of time limited benefits , or
- ✓ the information on the form is contradictory, questionable or incomplete.

Note: Telephone appointment letters are now available for selection from the Schedule Appointment page.

- If the client does not keep the appointment but calls to reschedule it, the case manager must reschedule the appointment on BEACON by:
 - going to the Calendar,
 - clicking on the appointment needing rescheduling,
 - entering in the new date and time,
 - clicking Save, and
 - printing the new appointment letter.
 - **Important:** All reevaluation activities (that is: scheduling of appointments, interviewing the client and the client returning all required verifications) must occur before the SNAP release date or the SNAP case will still close.
 - If the client does not keep the appointment and does not call to reschedule it, the cash case and SNAP case must be closed by the case manager. The EBC closing notice for a cash case with PA SNAP benefits will contain a paragraph with NOMI language.

Note: When case managers close the cash case, BEACON will coincide the cash closing date with the certification end date of the SNAP portion of the case.
 - For cash cases with an associated NPA case, if the client does not keep the appointment and does not call to reschedule it, the case manager must send out a Notice of Missed Interview for SNAP Recertification (NOMI) to the client (Attachment C) to ensure that the client is notified timely that his or her NPA SNAP case is closing. There is a NOMI for SNAP Recertification icon on BEACON on the Reevaluation Due view. When the SNAP case is selected and the icon is clicked, a batch request will be created to generate the new prefilled BEACON NOMI for SNAP Recertification form (new with this process).
 - If the prefilled SNAP reevaluation form is returned to the TAO (whether the interview has taken place or not), the clerk must go to the Reevaluation page on the Reevaluation workflow and initiate the SNAP reevaluation portion of the case (the cash reevaluation portion cannot be initiated until the interview has occurred) to begin the reevaluation process (new with this process).
 - If the client keeps either the initial appointment or the rescheduled appointment, the reevaluation interview is conducted.

Note: Clients have been told to complete the prefilled SNAP reevaluation form and return the form to the TAO.
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**Case Manager
Responsibilities
(continued)**

- At the interview (either telephonic or face-to-face), review the form with the client to ensure all the information is accurately reflected on the form (new with this process).

- Once the interview is completed, if there are missing required verifications the case manager must generate a BEACON VC-1 and mail it or give it to the client.

Reminder: It is important not to request more verification than is needed to determine client eligibility. For SNAP, no requirement for a specific type of verification may be imposed (see 106 CMR 365.830). Case managers are reminded that data matches and self-declarations are available to verify certain eligibility factors and that a single document may verify more than one eligibility factor (that is, birth certificate may verify age and relationship). See Operations Memo 2010-55: “TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Verification” for more information.

Important: A copy of the BEACON reevaluation form must be mailed to every client whether they have returned the prefilled form or not requesting that it be returned with his or her signature along with a Verification Checklist listing any other verification(s) needed to complete the reevaluation (including listing the signed form). **A signed BEACON reevaluation form must be part of every reevaluation.**

- As verifications are returned by the client, the case manager must enter receipt of the verifications on the Verification tab.
- If the client returns only some of the required verifications and the reevaluation needs to be completed, the case manager must determine which program(s) should be recertified, if any, and which program(s) should close, if any.

Reminder: A SNAP recertification can be processed if all mandatory verification has been provided, but optional verification has been delayed. See Operations Memo 2010-55: “TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Verification,” for a listing of SNAP mandatory and optional verifications.

Example: Mary Smith returns verifications after her reevaluation interview. Her case manager reviews the verifications and realizes that those provided prove eligibility only for the SNAP portion of the case (included with the verifications received, are the signed BEACON reevaluation form and prefilled form). Mary’s case manager recertifies the SNAP case and closes the cash case for failure to provide verifications once the verification due date has passed.

Case Manager Responsibilities (continued)

- Once all required verifications are received, the reevaluation is submitted by the case manager and the client is determined eligible. When the case manager selects the cash case for reevaluation, the Reevaluation Type on the Interview Wrapup page will be prefilled to “Reevaluation” and the Reevaluation End Date for all related programs for the grantee will be aligned.

Note: Cash and SNAP cases will align unless the SNAP reevaluation period is longer than one year (for example, elderly/disabled households). In that situation the cash case will have a one-year reevaluation period.

Attachment D provides a quick reference guide for this process.

Actuate Report

The Actuate Report entitled SNAP Reevaluation Report has been renamed to Reevaluation Report. It includes all cash and SNAP cases whose reevaluation end date is 60 days or less of the report run date regardless of whether a Notice of Expiration has been sent or an Interim Report has been sent.

An Appmt Date field displays appointments scheduled anytime within 60 days of the reevaluation end date regardless of if or when a reevaluation was initiated.

A Program column was added to display the program name.

Final Reminders

TAO staff is reminded:

Closings for failure to keep a reevaluation appointment must not be removed until the client is interviewed (either telephonically or face-to-face). A reevaluation is not complete unless the client has kept the interview appointment, provided all necessary verifications, including the signed prefilled and recertification forms and all BEACON pages have been completed. An edit has been created preventing the submission of a reevaluation along with a closing for either a missed interview or failure to provide required verification.

SNAP and cash have different verification criteria. Some verifications considered mandatory for cash are considered optional for SNAP. Refer to Operations Memo 2010-55, TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Verification, for guidelines.

Attachment E

Attachment E is a question and answer quick reference guide based on questions raised at the training sessions.

Obsolete Memo This memo obsoletes Operations Memo 2011-55.

Questions If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

Attachment A

200 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

CAN 710

Important Notice - Read Carefully
Este Mensaje Es Importante - Lea Cuidadosamente

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

Mary Jones
101 Main Street.
Malden, MA 02148

Agency Id: 9999999
Malden TAO - DTA

11/7/2011

Dear Mary Jones,

Beginning in November, the way the Department reviews your SNAP benefits will change.

Forty-five days before your SNAP benefits are scheduled to end, the Department will send you a notice and a prefilled form. Your case manager will also send you an appointment letter to review your SNAP benefits. Your cash benefits will be reviewed at the same time.

If you do not hear from your case manager within 14 days from the date of the notice, contact him or her so an appointment to review your SNAP benefits can be made before your SNAP benefits are scheduled to end.

It is very important that you keep the appointment. If you don't, your case may close.

If you have any questions about this notice, please call your case manager.

Attachment B

BEACON FORM/NOTICE
LANGUAGE WITH VARIABLE TEXT (ENGLISH)

{Form_Notice_Title}

{TAO_Address_CAN}
{TAO_City_State_ZIP}

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

{Recipient_Name}
{Recipient_Mailing_Address}
{Recipient_City_State_Zip}

Agency ID: {AP_ID}
Recipient SSN: {XXX-XX-####}
{BEACON_User_Office_Name}

Recipient Telephone {Recipient_Tele}

Date: {DOC_Creation_Date}

Dear {Grantee}

Your Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP benefits are due to end on {Recert_End_Date}. Attached to this notice is a pre-printed recertification form with information that you told us about you, the people living with you and your household income and expenses. To recertify means that you must complete the enclosed form, be interviewed and provide all requested verifications.

To be considered to have made a timely application for recertification, Federal law allows you until {Apply_by_Date} to return this form. However, to complete the recertification process, we are required to interview you and request proof or verification of the information you tell us. By the time we are able to interview you, and you have provided all verifications, several days would have passed. To avoid any interruption to your benefits, please return the form to your Transitional Assistance Office at {BEACON_User_Office_Name} on or before {Return_by_Date}.

Before returning the form, please be sure to:

- answer **ALL** of the questions on the form;
- sign the last page of the form; and
- return all pages of the form to us.

If you do not return the completed form, have an interview with your case manager, and submit all of the verifications we ask you to provide, your SNAP benefits will stop. If you are late completing all of recertification activities, your SNAP benefits may also be late. If required verifications are late, your SNAP benefits may stop or be reduced.

Your SNAP amount will be based on what you tell us. Once we receive your completed form, your case manager will call you for an interview to go over the answers on the form and/or ask for necessary verifications. If you are available when your case manager calls, the interview may be conducted at that time or your case manager will schedule an interview for another date. **It is important to note that if you miss the scheduled interview, it is your responsibility to reschedule or your SNAP benefits may be delayed or denied.**

DTA is required to accept your application as long as it is **signed** and contains a readable name and address. You may file an application in person, by mail, fax, or through an authorized representative.

Remember, to avoid any delay or interruption to your benefit we urge you to send back the completed and signed form, no later than {Return_by_Date}.

A good time and day to reach you by phone:

Time(s): _____

Circle all that apply: Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

If your name, address or telephone number has changed since {Name_of_Month/YYYY}, please complete:

New Name _____

New Address _____

New Telephone () _____

Your Case Manager: {BEACON_User_Name}

{BEACON_User_Office_Name}

Case Manager Telephone Number:

{BEACON_User_Phone}

TAO Fax Number:

{BEACON_User_Office_Fax}

Attachment C

{TAO_Address_CAN}
{TAO_City_State_ZIP}

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

{Recipient_Name}
{Recipient_Mailing_Address}
{Recipient_City_State_Zip}

Agency ID: {AP_ID}
{BEACON_User_Office_Name}

Date: {DOC_Creation_Date}

{Recipient_Tele}

Notice of Missed Interview for SNAP Recertification

Dear {Grantee}:

We recently informed you that your SNAP benefits would end on **{Recert_End_Date}** and that it was time for you to recertify. We also informed you that if you were late recertifying your SNAP benefits **may be closed or delayed**.

We scheduled an appointment for you to be interviewed, but you did not keep the appointment.

To complete the recertification process, you must contact your case manager as soon as possible to reschedule the missed appointment. **You must be interviewed and provide all required verifications by {NOMI_Due_Date}**.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SNAP BENEFITS

If your circumstances have changed and you no longer wish to receive SNAP benefits, you should check the box below, sign your name, then mail, fax or drop off this notice to your Transitional Assistance Office.

I no longer wish to receive SNAP benefits. _____

Signature of Client

Date

{BEACON_User_Name}
Case Manager Name

{BEACON_User_Phone}
Case Manager's Telephone Number

TAO Fax Number: {BEACON_User_Office_Fax_Number}

Attachment D

Case Manager Actions

	Cash	SNAP PA	SNAP NPA
Missed Appointment	Case manager closes for missed appointment.	Case manager closes for missed appointment (NOMI language appears in closing notice).	Case closes automatically. (NOMI needs to be sent by case manager).
Interview but No Verification Provided	Case manager closes for lack of verification.	Case manager determines eligibility. If eligible establish new certification period. If not, case will close automatically.	Case manager determines eligibility. If eligible establish new certification period. If not, case will close automatically.

Attachment E

- Q. 1. Does the case manager always need to create an appointment letter in BEACON? For example, a client who needs a Reevaluation walks in for case maintenance and the case manager asks the client if he or she has time to conduct the review. Should the case manager create an appointment letter for this situation?
- A. 1. Yes. Doing this will populate the view appropriately. In this situation, case managers are encouraged to schedule this appointment that day and conduct the interview. The appointment letter does not need to be sent, but will still appear in Document History. Only one appointment letter needs to be created for both programs (cash and SNAP).
- Q. 2. Closings for clients who do not keep appointments have been programmed to coincide with SNAP certification end dates. For example, a closing was submitted on 12/06/11 for a client whose SSN ends in 9. The client's SNAP certification ends 01/13/12 and cash case closes on 01/13/12 as well. What if a closing is submitted late for this client (on 01/11/12)? The SNAP case will close on 1/13/12. When will the cash case close?
- A. 2. The cash case is programmed to close on the SNAP end date (1/13/12) *unless the release date for the SSN has passed*. If the release date has passed, the cash case will be closed before the next check date (1/28/12). Simultaneous closings are based upon scheduling and taking action on cases timely.
- Q. 3. Must the case manager send a NOMI for an NPA case associated with the cash case?
- A. 3. Yes. See page 7 of this memo.
- Q. 4. The recent instructions regarding the new process state not to submit a review until all verifications are submitted to BEACON. So if the case manager closes the case without submitting the review upon reinstating the case, is the case manager required to redo the entire reevaluation workflow?
- A. 4. No. The reevaluation workflow is still available for the case manager to submit. Reevaluations are not complete until and unless the interview is conducted and all verifications have been submitted to BEACON.
- Q. 5. Many cash cases close and are almost immediately reinstated (ESP, MR etc.), will the *DEVER* logic shorten these SNAP certification dates and will the case managers be able to change them back to their original dates when reinstating the cash case?
- A. 5. The *DEVER* logic in these situations remains unchanged from the *DEVER* logic established prior to this new reevaluation process beginning. If the cash case closes during the reevaluation period, the SNAP case will *DEVER* and keep the original end certification date. Exception: If the case *DEVER*S to TBA, the certification period will be five months.

- Q. 6. BEACON has sent out the Notice of Expiration and a Prefilled SNAP Reevaluation form. The client has returned that form signed. The case manager has a telephonic interview with the client and sends out a VC-I requesting missing verifications and the BEACON reevaluation form. The client returns some of the verifications, but does not return the BEACON reevaluation form. Can either the SNAP or the cash case be processed if only the Prefilled SNAP Reevaluation form has been returned?
- A. 6. Provided the client has provided verification for processing the SNAP case, the signed Prefilled SNAP Reevaluation form is acceptable to process the case. The cash case cannot be processed if the BEACON reevaluation form has not been signed and returned by the client.
- Q. 7. Are TAFDC and EAEDC cases automatically closing when the SNAP case automatically closes?
- A. 7. No. Automated TAFDC and EAEDC case closings are not part of this change.