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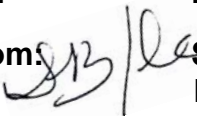*600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111*

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Operations Memo 2012-17
April 25, 2012

To: **Department of Transitional Assistance Staff**

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

Re: **TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Missing Verifications**

Overview

The current EBC notice generated to an applicant/client (hereafter called client) advising that his or her case is going to be denied, closed or reduced for failure to provide verification(s) does not identify the missing verifications or the person(s) for whom the verification(s) is missing.

Identifying the missing verification(s) and the person(s) to whom the verification(s) is attributed on the EBC denial, closing and/or reduction notices:

- will provide clients with information needed to help resolve the denial/closing/reduction; and

- should reduce TAO traffic and/or phone calls from clients seeking explanations about outstanding verifications.

Additionally, some cash and SNAP cases are denied, closed or reduced prematurely without allowing the client sufficient time to provide verifications based on program rules.

Some SNAP cases are also inappropriately denied, closed or reduced when only optional verifications are outstanding.

These practices violate program rules, and for the SNAP program, cause negative errors.

Purpose of Memo

This Operations Memo advises TAO staff about:

- the changes to BEACON regarding missing verifications; and

- procedures for correctly entering confirmation of returned verifications on BEACON.

BEACON Changes:
Requesting Verification at Application

As part of the verification enhancement process, changes were made in BEACON Build 44.3 (July 5, 2011) that added Self Declaration to the Verification Documents Items drop-down list. Since that Build, Self Declaration is an allowable choice as a selectable item to verify certain Verification Items for TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP.

Effective with BEACON Build 44.7, scheduled for April 30, 2012, the following verification enhancement changes will take place in BEACON when case managers request verification from clients.

When a case manager requests verification, BEACON will prepopulate the verification requested by the case manager and automatically enter Return by Dates on the VC-1, INT-1 and INT-2 based on application/reevaluation time frame standards from either the cash or SNAP program rules.

- If a client requests expedited SNAP benefits and verification of identity is missing, when the case manager generates the VC-1, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as seven days from the SNAP application date.

- If a client applies for SNAP benefits and required verification is missing, when the case manager generates the VC-1, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as 30 days from the SNAP application date.

    Note: If during the SNAP application process, the case manager discovers that an additional verification is missing, when the case manager generates the VC-1, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as the application disposition date (30 days from the SNAP application date) or if there are less than 10 days until the application disposition date, 10 days from the additional verification request date.

    Important: If there are less than ten days left before day-30 for the SNAP application, **the case manager must also send a pending denial form (SNAPNL-2)** to the client, allowing **60 days from the date of application** for the additional verifications to be provided. On day-30, manually deny the case on BEACON and suppress the EBC notice. Be sure to keep a copy of the pending denial form in the case record.

BEACON Changes:
Requesting Verification at Application **(continued)**

- If a client applies for SNAP benefits, subsequently requests Expedited SNAP benefits after the initial SNAP application date and the case manager generates the VC-1 for identity for the Expedited SNAP benefits, that VC-1 return by date will be 7 days from the Expedited application date. If the Expedited SNAP benefits are not issued and not removed by Day 30, the case manager must disposition the case. Pending cases with Expedited requests will **not** be automatically denied by the batch job on Day 30.

- If a client applies for TAFDC or EAEDC benefits and verifications are required, when the case manager generates the VC-1, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as 22 days from the TAFDC or EAEDC application date.

   Note: If during the application process, the case manager discovers that additional verification is missing, when the case manager generates the VC-1, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as the application disposition date whether that date is ten days in the future or not.

- If a client who applied for TAFDC or EAEDC benefits has required verifications still missing on day 22, BEACON will automatically generate an INT-1 in an overnight batch process allowing the client an additional eight days to provide the missing verification.

- If a client who has applied for TAFDC or EAEDC benefits, has required verifications still missing on day 30, and has requested additional time to provide the missing verification prior to day 30, the case manager must go to either the Verifications tab or the Program Change page and click the new Request INT-2 checkbox. BEACON will then automatically generate an INT-2 in an overnight batch process allowing the client an additional 15 days to provide the missing verification.

- If an existing client applies for benefits in another program, BEACON will follow the missing verification rules for the pending application for the new program request.

Requesting Verification at Reevaluation, Reapplication and Other Reported Changes

- If a client is being reevaluated for cash or SNAP and required verifications are missing, when the case manager generates the VC-1, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as 10 days from the date of the reevaluation interview.

   Note: For SNAP cases **only**, the case will close on the required timely case closing date. See Operations Memo 2011-55A for further instructions.

BEACON Changes:
Requesting Verification **(continued)**

- If a client is reapplying or being reinstated for benefits and required verifications are missing, when the case manager generates the VC-1, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as 30 days from the reapplication/reinstatement date.

- If a client is reporting a change and the required verification is missing, when the case manager generates the VC-1, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as 10 days from the reporting date.

Note: For all of the situations mentioned in this section, if the due date falls on a weekend or a holiday, the due date will be set by BEACON as the next available business day.

Important: If the TAFDC missing verification is immunization, BEACON will prepopulate the Return by Date as 60 days from the request date whether at application, reevaluation or reporting a change.

"Combination Cases"

If a client is receiving benefits in one category and applies for benefits in another category of assistance, the rules stated in this section for requesting verifications for that category apply.

If the client is applying for cash and SNAP at the same time, the rules for requesting verifications for each category apply. That is, a VC-1 and INT-1 with prepopulated return by dates to provide the missing verifications for cash will be issued by BEACON following rules found in this section. The SNAP case will either be approved by the case manager or automatically denied on day 30 following rules that are found in the "New Functionality and Edits" section of this memo or will be manually denied by the case manager when issuing a pending denial form following instructions found on page 2 of this memo.

BEACON Changes:
Notices

Whenever a case or client is denied, closed or terminated for "Failure to submit required verifications," the BEACON generated notices will contain the following information:

- a paragraph that states: "We did not receive the verifications that we asked for. Please see the attached list for verifications that are still missing."

- the list of missing verifications and the name of the person for whom the verification is missing (mirroring the layout of the BEACON-generated VC-1); and

BEACON Changes:
Notices
(continued)

- a paragraph that advises clients their retroactive eligibility date if all verifications are returned. The notice will also state: "Please let us know if:
  ✓ You think we already have your verifications.
  ✓ You need help getting your verifications.
  ✓ There is a good reason why you didn't turn in your verifications.
  ✓ You have a disability or health problem that makes it hard to get your verifications."

BEACON Changes: *New Functionality and Edits*

To support case managers in processing missing verifications, new functionality and edits have been added to BEACON Build 44.7. These changes are:

- BEACON will prevent case managers from erroneously closing or denying cases or clients for "Failure to submit required verifications" when:
  ✓ the only missing verification is optional (SNAP only);
  ✓ the client has not been given sufficient time to provide the verification(s) based on program time-frames;
  ✓ there are no outstanding verifications; or
  ✓ SNAP applications will be automatically denied by a batch job.

- BEACON will automatically deny a pending SNAP application that has outstanding verifications on the Application Disposition Date unless the pending case:
  ✓ has at least one mandatory outstanding verification with a verification due date later than the original application disposition date;
  ✓ is a pending Expedited SNAP case; or
  ✓ does not have any outstanding mandatory verifications.

- A new checkbox has been added to the Program Change page and the Verification tab called Request for INT-2;

- On the Program Change page, the Extending Due Date field has been replaced with the Application Due field;

  Note: The Application Due field identifies the Application Disposition Date.

BEACON Changes: *New Functionality and Edits* **(continued)**

- On the Verification tab, the only selectable document will be the Verification Checklist as the INT-1 and INT-2 are BEACON-generated forms only;

  Note: If the case manager attempts to send out a VC-1 with a verification already listed on the INT-1, the following pop-up warning message will appear: "You are not allowed to send a Verification Checklist notice for an AU with unverified verifications that were included in an INT-1 notice already printed."

- On the AU Composition Results page, edits are in place to prevent case managers from entering incorrect denials, closings or reductions for the Noncooperation Reason of "Failure to submit required verifications":

  ✓ Case managers will not be able to deny a pending SNAP application on or before the Application Disposition date.
  ✓ Case managers will not be able to deny a pending SNAP application or a reevaluation when the only outstanding verifications are optional.
  ✓ Case managers will not be able to deny/close a case or remove a client if the case/client has not been given enough time to provide the verifications based on the program rules found in the "BEACON Changes: Requested Verifications" section of this memo.
  ✓ Case managers will not be able to deny/close a case or remove a client if there are no missing verifications.

- On the Interview Wrapup page, if the only outstanding verifications are optional for a SNAP case, an authorization to Pending Release may be processed for approvals, reevaluations/recertifications, Interim Reports, etc.; and

- On the Verification Due view, three new columns with program-specific due dates (Due for FS, Due for TAFDC and Due for EAEDC) have been added.

Case Manager Responsibilities

Operations Memo 2011-55A informed TAO staff that as verifications are returned by the client, the case manager must enter receipt of the verifications on the Verification tab.

Doing this will ensure that:

- if the client needs an INT-1 sent after 22 days from the application date, when BEACON automatically sends out the form, the appropriate missing verifications will also be automatically listed; and

Case Manager Responsibilities (continued)

- if the client or case closes for failure to provide verification, the appropriate missing verifications and client are listed on the closing notice.

Case managers must:

- ensure that verifications are entered onto the Verification tab **as they are received from the client** to ensure that correct documentation is issued if:
  - ✓ an INT-1 or INT-2 must be sent to the client; or
  - ✓ a denial/closing or reduction notice must be sent to the client; and

- when a client calls about why his or her case is closing, inform him or her to refer to the notice to determine what verification is missing.

Questions

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