

DSS-4357EL

WGIUPD

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

04/27/00

**DIVISION:** Office of Medicaid Management

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**TO:** All Local District Commissioners, Medicaid Directors

**FROM:** Betty Rice, Director  
Division of Consumer & Local District Relations

**SUBJECT:** Change in the Definition of Household Size

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately

**CONTACT PERSON:** Local District Liaison: Upstate (518) 474-9130  
New York City (212) 268-6855

Chapter 2 of the Laws of 1998 required the development of a combined Child Health Plus/Medicaid/WIC application (the "Growing Up Healthy" application) for pregnant women and for children up to age nineteen. It also required the implementation of outreach and enrollment strategies for these programs, including the use of community-based organizations to assist families in the application procedure. The process by which this will be accomplished is called facilitated enrollment. Facilitators will prescreen applicants to decide whether they appear to be eligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus. Local districts will soon begin to receive Growing Up Healthy applications from the 34 community-based organizations which have been awarded contracts by the Department to act as facilitators.

The use of a single application form by facilitators has necessitated an examination of how the programs differ. A major difference between Child Health Plus and Medicaid has been the determination of household size. In order to more closely align the programs, a common method of determining household size has been developed. For both Medicaid and Child Health Plus, the initial screening by the facilitator will include non-applying siblings up to the age of 21 who are living with the applicants. This provides families the benefit of a larger household size. If a non-applying child has income which causes the applicants to appear ineligible for Medicaid, the non-applying child and his/her income may be excluded, at the family's choice.

When families apply directly to a local district office, eligibility workers should initially include all applying and non-applying siblings residing together in the household size. In the event that such sibling has income which renders the applicants ineligible, workers must explain the right to exclude any applying **or** non-applying children with income from the household count, as required by the Mehler/Vailes litigation. This applies to: Low Income Families, ADC-related Medically Needy, and Expanded/poverty level budgeting methodologies.

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As a point of clarification, districts are permitted to include in the household size of a minor child any individual residing with that child who would have been allowed to be included under the ADC-related budgeting methodology (e.g., the child's cousin, for whom the child's mother is a caretaker).

An ADM will provide more specific information. Please direct any questions to your Local District Liaison at the numbers listed above.