

DSS-4357EL

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DIVISION: Temporary Assistance

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TO: Commissioners of Social Services, Temporary Assistance Directors,
Medicaid Directors

FROM: Patricia A. Stevens, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Temporary
Assistance and Betty Rice, Director, Division of Consumer & Local
District Relations

SUBJECT: Medication Grant Program - the Need for Cooperation and
Coordination between Local Departments of Social Services
(LDSS) and Mental Hygiene (DMH)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: OTDA: Dottie Mullooly (518) 474-9101
DOH: Upstate (518) 474-9130 & NYC (212) 268-6855

Section 15 of Kendra's Law authorizes the Commissioner of the Office of Mental Health (OMH) to provide grants to counties and New York City (NYC) for the Medication Grant Program (MGP). The MGP provides for medication and other services necessary to prescribe and administer medication to treat individuals with mental illness while a decision is being made on their application for Medicaid.

In order to qualify for the MGP, individuals must apply for Medicaid prior to or within one week of discharge or release from a hospital (operated or licensed by the Office of Mental Health) or a forensic or similar mental health unit of a prison or jail.

While the law requires that the individual must have applied for Medicaid, it is probable that most applicants will be in need of Temporary Assistance and Food Stamps as well. To insure that applications can be filed as early as possible, DOH, OTDA and OMH have developed a cooperative process for handling these applications.

For individuals eligible for participation in the Medication Grant Program, the local DMH, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the LDSS, will accept applications for Medicaid, Temporary Assistance, and Food Stamps and forward applications and supporting documentation to the LDSS. The date that the local DMH receives the signed, completed application will be considered the application filing date. This will allow the local DMH to certify that an application has been filed and immediately begin an individual's eligibility for the Medication Grant Program.

The local DMH will be required to submit a plan to OMH which must detail, in addition to other things, the process by which the LDSS or NYC will improve the timely and expeditious filing of Medicaid applications and coordinate the filing of applications for other public benefits.

DOH, OTDA and OMH have developed a suggested MOU which will be released with a Local Commissioner's Memorandum. Additional policy information will be forthcoming in an Administrative Directive. LDSSs can expect to be contacted by local DMH staff to initiate discussions about the implementation of the Medication Grant Program.