

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

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DIVISION: Office of Medicaid Management

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TO: Local District Commissioners, Medicaid Directors, TA & FS Directors, WMS Coordinators, CAP coordinators, Child Support Directors

FROM: Betty Rice, Director
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Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

SUBJECT: Discontinuance of Easements for Medicaid and Temporary Assistance Applicants Displaced by Hurricane Katrina

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2005

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The purpose of this GIS is to update districts on Medicaid and Temporary Assistance procedures for Hurricane Katrina evacuees who apply for assistance.

Medicaid

Hurricane Katrina evacuees who apply for Medicaid on or after November 1, 2005, may no longer be authorized for retroactive or prospective Medicaid using the easements described in GIS 05 TA/DC027, GIS 05 TA/DC028 and OMM GIS 05 MA/036. As of November 1, 2005, evacuees must meet regular Medicaid program requirements, including all documentation requirements. Districts are reminded that disaster relief payments, such as those from FEMA, are not considered in determining eligibility.

To date, experience has shown that in most instances evacuees have most of the necessary documentation to substantiate their eligibility for assistance. As with any Medicaid application, if an applicant (evacuee) advises the district that she or he is having difficulty obtaining the necessary documentation, the district must assist the applicant.

Special WMS coding (in New York City: case type 21, category code 66; Rest of State: coded AFA 509 and/or FAP J) should **not** be used for Hurricane Katrina evacuees who apply for Medicaid-only on or after November 1, 2005.

Medicaid-only Renewal/Recertification for Katrina Evacuees

To renew Medicaid, a face-to-face interview will be required for Hurricane Katrina recipients who were previously authorized for Medicaid-only based on the guidance in GIS 05 TA/DC027, GIS 05 TA/DC028 and OMM GIS 05 MA/036.

Medicaid-only renewals are generated by the LDSS (or the State on behalf of the LDSS when appropriate coding has been used) based on the monthly report of recipients due for renewal. Because there are no means to change the renewal system for Hurricane Katrina cases, districts must take the following steps.

Districts must identify and contact Hurricane Katrina recipients to request that they appear for a face-to-face interview. Explain to the recipient that they received special expedited processing at the time of application and must now bring in all documents necessary to continue Medicaid, except any documents already in the case record for factors not subject to change (e.g., birth certificates). Please note that the recipient may use the renewal form received from the district to renew. Further guidance on this procedure is forthcoming.

If necessary, the case must be extended, according to normal procedures, to allow for scheduling the interview.

If the recipient is a resident of New York State, in accordance with 18 NYCRR 360-3.2(k), and is determined to be eligible, the case should be processed for Medicaid coverage, with a 12-month authorization and the opportunity to enroll in managed care or the Family Health Plus program, as appropriate. The recipient must be reminded to inform the district **immediately** of any change of address or other circumstance affecting their eligibility.

Temporary Assistance (TA) Implications

Effective November 1, 2005, districts must begin to process applications for temporary assistance using the regular eligibility and processing standards and requirements, including applicant employment requirements consistent with the local Welfare-To-Work employment plan for Hurricane Katrina Evacuees. The standards/procedures outlined in GIS 05 TA/DC028 and the initial certification period instructions outlined in GIS 05 TA/DC041, for Hurricane Katrina evacuees who apply for Family Assistance and Safety Net Assistance on or after November 1, 2005 no longer apply. Applications for TA from Hurricane Katrina evacuees received prior to November 1, 2005, must continue to be processed under the original easements outlined in these releases.

Districts must continue to assist all applicants including Hurricane Katrina evacuees in securing documentation when such assistance is requested by the applicant. As outlined in 02 ADM-02, an applicant with emergency/immediate needs, who is unable to secure required documentation, even when assisted by district staff, may still have his/her immediate needs met if at a minimum, he/she can verify identity, family composition and citizenship/alien status. If an applicant is unable to provide verification of these minimum requirements, he/she may be granted short-term assistance until verification can be obtained, or until ineligibility is determined, if the district determines that the applicant is cooperating in obtaining such verification. Please see 04 INF-09 regarding alternative sources of verification.

Although processing easements for TA applicants from Hurricane Katrina end on November 1, 2005, payments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Red Cross and payments made under Disaster Unemployment Insurance continue to remain exempt from consideration as income as does any payment which specifically exempts the payment from consideration in determining eligibility for needs based programs.

Instructions regarding initial certification periods for TA as outlined in GIS 05 TA/DC041 continue to apply in those cases where short-term assistance was granted to applicants who submitted applications for TA prior to November 1, 2005.

TA WMS Implications

For Upstate WMS users, although processing easements for TA applicants end on November 1, 2005, Upstate workers should continue to enter a "J" in the FAP Indicator on Screen 3 for each individual evacuee and use Special Claim Code "J" for Katrina-related pay lines on WMS Screens 6 and 9. This coding should continue for evacuees, (including those who apply for TA or FS on or after November 1, 2005) until further notice.

For Downstate WMS, users should continue to use, until further notice, the case and line level opening code, 064, which should be used to open the cases of evacuees of hurricane Katrina, even when the evacuee applies after November 1, 2005 and the case processing easements no longer apply. This is valid on TA and Food Stamps applications. This will allow for the continued tracking of these cases.