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TO: **Economic Support Supervisors
Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers**

FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
Technical Assistance, Training & Education
Section
Bureau of Eligibility Management
Division of Health Care Financing

BEM/DWS OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 06-50

DATE: 12/01/2006

FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	W-2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>	EA	<input type="checkbox"/>	CF	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	JC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
WIA	<input type="checkbox"/>	WtW	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	EP	<input type="checkbox"/>	★		

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: **2007 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)**

CROSS REFERENCE: Medicaid Eligibility Handbook (MEH)

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2007

BACKGROUND

The Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2007 is 3.3% for the Social Security Administration (SSA) Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI or Title II) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI or Title XVI) programs.

The federal COLA increase will result in changes in CARES to the (MA) income levels, allowances and deductions as outlined in pages 5 - 10 of this memo. The changes associated with these adjustments will be included in the 07-01 MEH release.

The Social Security (SS) Auto Update process will update Social Security amounts at the COLA mass change. We will still do our monthly SS auto-update on the second Saturday of the month. Remember, because SSA doesn't create a SS mid-month file, there is only one SS auto-update in December.

CARES eligibility re-determinations for January 2007 will occur as part of the annual COLA mass change on the weekend of December 2, 2006.

NOTE > SSI amounts will not be updated in CARES through the COLA mass change. SSI amounts will continue to be auto-updated on a weekly basis. The increase in federal SSI payments will appear as an auto-update after adverse action in December 2006 and will impact February 2007 benefits. The regular SSI auto-update alerts will be generated when these amounts change.

There will not be a COLA increase in State SSI Supplement or SSI-E payment amounts; however these amounts may be changed in the auto-update process for other reasons.

CARES

MASS CHANGE

Data updates are made based upon information received from the Social Security Administration (SSA) related to COLA increases to social security benefits (i.e., disability, survivor, and retirement). The Medicare Part B premium amount is also updated based upon the yearly amount set in federal law. For calendar year 2007, the federal benefit COLA increase is 3.3% of the current benefit.

The Mass Change will update the following fields on the CARES Unearned Income page/AFUI and Medicare page/AFMD:

- Social Security Benefit
- SSA/COLA DAC Disregard
- QMB/SLMB "Current" Disregard
- SSA Claim Number
- Social Security Payment Subtype
- All Fields on the Medicare Page/AFMD

For each person in a W-2, Child Care, Medicaid, BadgerCare, Family Care Assistance Group (AG), or FoodShare (FS) AG that is open or has been closed less than 30 days, CARES will update the SSA benefit amount with an effective date of 01/07. Because SeniorCare uses an annual budgeting process, SC only cases will not be updated automatically.

When applicable, the CARES Medicare Page/AFMD will be updated with the increased Medicare Part B premium amount. The premium payor will be updated on the CWW Medicare Page if SSA data differs from that in CARES.

ALERTS

The following alerts require further action by the worker:

369 SS INFO UPD AND DISCREP EXISTS

The auto-update process adds together the net SS income of all SS income types on the Unearned Income Page, plus any Medicare premium on the Medicare Page, plus any SS recoupments. These three amounts are also shown on DXSA. The total is then matched against the gross SSA income on the BENDEX file. If that total does not match, there could be a discrepancy (possible garnishments being taken from SS income for child support, back taxes, etc). If a mismatch is found, the Unearned Income Page will be updated with the net amount and this alert will be set for the worker. The worker must follow up with SSA to determine the reason for the discrepancy. The worker will need to determine the difference in the gross versus the net and enter this amount as OT income on the Unearned Income Page.

349 ELIG NOT DET AT MC/AA RUN SFEX

This alert indicates that the case did not go through mass change or adverse action because it exceptioned off. These are the cases that appear on the EOS Exception report C306. This report includes cases with overrides, cases with person add/deletes that have not been confirmed, FoodShare cases closed less than 30 days and AG's in pending status. These cases are also listed on the monthly mass change report C307. For these cases, you must run SFEX to determine eligibility and confirm when you get the correct determination. If you do not run SFEX and confirm before Adverse Action (AA), you must run SFEX with the recurring month's date. For FS cases, issue a supplement or create an overpayment claim based on the correct eligibility.

The following alerts will not be set due to the large number of individuals involved.

370 FYI SS INCOME UPDATED**383 FYI MEDICARE INFORMATION UPDATED**

When the COLA record includes Railroad Retirement, the case will not be automatically updated. The following alerts will be generated and sent to the primary worker and alternate worker when the update did not occur:

379 SSA INDICATES RAILROAD BENEFIT

This alert will be generated to the primary worker whenever the record from SSA indicates that the individual is receiving Railroad Benefits.

380 SSA INDICATES RR BENEFIT

This alert will be generated to the alternate worker whenever the record from SSA indicates that the individual is receiving Railroad Benefits.

NOTE ➤CUAH, alert help text often has useful information for workers providing information about why the alert was set and what action is needed.

REPORTS

CARES data now matches SSA data more accurately since we are automatically updating SSA records on a monthly basis. We anticipate the number of exceptions generated during the mass change to be greatly reduced. For the exceptions that do result, we have identified a number of reports that local agencies can use to resolve these exceptions.

Reports that require worker action

EOS/CARES Report ID		Report Title
C306	CMC190RA	MASS CHANGE EXCEPTION LISTING This report is produced at any Mass Change and lists AGs that did not run through eligibility. Cases on this report must be reviewed by local agencies and the issues resolved. The individual cases on this report will also have alert 349 generated.

Informational Reports

The following reports are for information purposes only and may be useful when researching an exception.

EOS/CARES Report ID		Report Title
C300	CMC180RA	AGS AFFECTED BY MASS CHANGE This is a list of cases with an assistance group that increased or decreased as a result of the mass change. If one Assistance group in the case changed, all assistance groups are listed.
C301	CMC180RB	MASS CHANGE SUMMARY BY AGENCY This report shows the number of AGs by agency that opened, closed, increased and decreased. It also shows dollar amounts when applicable.
C302	CMC180RC	MASS CHANGE SUMMARY STATEWIDE This report shows the number of AGs statewide that opened, closed, increased and decreased. It also shows dollar amounts when applicable.

CARES TABLES

Reference table updates are being made to four CARES tables that are used in determining MA eligibility. The updates will be effective on January 1, 2007 for CARES tables TMEP, TASP, and TSCA. Updates to table TCDP have already been completed through 2007. Changes to these tables are required because of changes in the federal portion of the SSI payment level upon which the MA income limits are based or because of a change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

NOTE > Changes to TMST will not be needed this year because the AFDC-related and the SSI-related medically needy limits are capped at \$591.67 for group sizes of 1 and 2.

CARES Table	Data Updated
TMEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSI related income and shelter limit changes in Community Waiver income limits and personal maintenance allowances • Medicare Part B premium amount • Spousal impoverishment maximum income allocation
TASP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spousal impoverishment asset limit
TCDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dates controlling the time between the COLA mass change and the Federal Poverty Level mass change
TSCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSA COLA percentage

NEW PROGRAM AMOUNTS FOR 2007**INSTITUTIONS CATEGORICALLY NEEDY INCOME LIMIT**

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 5.8.5, 8.1.5

Effective Date: 01/01/07

CARES: This change is part of the 12/2/06 CARES mass change.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
Categorically needy income limit for person in a medical institution.	\$ 1,869	\$ 1,809

ELDERLY, BLIND, DISABLED (EBD) INCOME & ASSET CHANGES

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 8.1.5

Effective Date: 01/01/07

CARES: These changes are part of the 12/2/06 CARES mass change.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
Categorically Needy Income Size 1	\$499.11 + Actual Shelter up to \$207.67	\$ 485.78 + Actual Shelter up to \$ 201.00
Size 2	\$754.72 + Actual Shelter up to \$311.33	\$734.72 + Actual Shelter up to \$ 301.33
Medically Needy Income		
Size 1	No Change	\$ 591.67
Size 2	No Change	\$ 591.67
Categorically Needy Assets		
Size 1	No Change	\$ 2,000.00
Size 2	No Change	\$ 3,000.00
Medically Needy Assets		
Size 1	No Change	\$ 2,000.00
Size 2	No Change	\$ 3,000.00

EBD DEEMING AMOUNT TO AN INELIGIBLE MINOR

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 1.1.3.1.2 & 8.1.5.1

Effective Date: 01/01/07

CARES: This change is part of the 12/2/06 CARES mass change.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
EBD Deeming Amount to an Ineligible Minor	\$ 311	\$ 301

PARENTAL LIVING ALLOWANCE

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 1.1.3.1.2 & 8.1.5.1

Effective Date: 01/01/07

CARES: This change is part of the 12/2/06 CARES mass change.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
Parental Living Allowance – 1 Parent	\$ 623	\$ 603
2 Parents	\$ 934	\$ 904

SPOUSAL IMPOVERISHMENT INCOME ALLOCATION & ASSET SHARE

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 5.10.4.2 & 5.10.6.

Effective Date: 01/01/07

CARES: This change is part of the 12/2/06 CARES mass change.

INCOME

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
Community Spouse Asset Share (CSAS) maximum	\$ 101,640	\$ 99,540
Income allocation	\$ 2,541.00	\$ 2,488.50

ASSETS

IF the total countable assets of the couple are:	THEN the CSAS* is:	MA Eligibility Limit
\$203,280 or more	\$101,640	\$103,640
Less than \$203,280 but greater than \$100,000	½ of the total countable assets of the couple	½ + \$2,000
\$100,000 or less	\$50,000	\$52,000

*CSAS is the "Community Spouse Asset Share".

Income Allocation & Allowance

NOTE ➤ All dollar amounts are monthly amounts

Community Spouse Allocation	The maximum allocation is the <u>lesser</u> of: \$2,541.00, or \$2,200.00 plus excess shelter allowance. "Excess shelter allowance" means shelter expenses above \$660.00. Shelter expenses are mortgage, rent, taxes, maintenance fees, and a utility allowance.
Dependent Family Member Allocation	\$550.00 per dependent family member living with the community spouse. (This amount does not change with the COLA increases but rather with the Federal Poverty Level changes that occur in the spring of each year.)
Personal Needs Allowance	\$45 for institutionalized individuals.
Community Waivers Allowance	\$803 to \$1,869 for a person in community waivers

Spousal Impoverishment Brochure

Workers can access the Spousal Impoverishment Fact Sheet on the Internet at:

www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Medicaid1/recpubs/factsheets/phc10063.htm

MEDICARE PART B PREMIUM AMOUNT

Cross Reference:None

Effective Date: 01/01/07

CARES: This change is part of the 12/02/06 CARES mass change.

ITEM	OLD AMOUNT
Base Monthly Premium Amount	\$ 88.50

Starting January 1, 2007, Part B Premium will be Based on Income

Yearly Income			Monthly Premium
Single	Married (filing jointly)	Married (filing separately)	
\$80,000 or less	\$160,000 or less	\$80,000 or less	\$93.50
\$80,001 - \$100,000	\$160,001 - \$200,000		\$105.80
\$100,001 - \$150,000	\$200,001 - \$300,000		\$124.40
\$150,001 - \$200,000	\$300,001 - \$400,000	\$80,001 - \$120,000	\$142.90
Above \$200,000	Above \$400,000	Above \$120,000	\$161.40

The actual amount paid by the person is listed on the BENDEX file.

For each individual whose Medicare Part B Premium Amount or the Medicare Part B Premium Payor is updated, the HIC number on AFMD will also be updated if the COLA file is different than the CARES information. The HIC number will not be updated if CARES has Railroad Retirement or Black Lung Fund indicated on screen AFMD.

More information on the 2007 Part B Premiums is available at the following Medicare website: [Medicare/Questions/2007 Part B premiums](#).

SSI-E PAYMENT LEVEL

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 5.11.1.1, 5.11.2.2, 8.1.5.

Effective Date: No change.

CARES: Not applicable.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
State SSI-E Supplement	No change	\$ 95.99

COMMUNITY WAIVERS BASIC NEEDS ALLOWANCE

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 5.9.9.2.1, 8.1.5.1.

Effective Date: 01/01/07

CARES: This change is part of the 12/2/06 CARES mass change.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
Basic Needs Allowance	\$ 803	\$ 783
EBD Maximum Personal Maintenance Allowance	\$ 1,869	\$ 1,809

COMMUNITY WAIVERS SPECIAL INCOME LIMIT (GROUP B)

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 5.9.9.2, 8.1.5.

Effective Date: 01/01/07

CARES: This change is part of the 12/2/06 CARES mass change.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
Single person or spouse not applying.	\$ 1,869	\$ 1,809

AFDC-RELATED INCOME CHANGES

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 8.1.4
 Effective Date: No change.
 CARES: Not applicable.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
Income:		See <u>MEH</u> .
1. Categorically needy.	No Change	
2. Medically needy.	No Change	Size 1 = \$591.67

MEDICAID PURCHASE PLAN (MAPP) STANDARD LIVING ALLOWANCE

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 5.12.5.1 and 8.1.5.1
 Effective Date: 01/01/07
 CARES: This change is part of the 12/2/06 CARES mass change.

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
MAPP Standard Living Allowance, SLA	\$ 726	\$ 706

TUBERCULOSIS BENEFIT INCOME LIMIT

Cross Reference: MEH, Chapter 5.11.7.2
 Effective Date: 01/01/07
 CARES: Not applicable (manual determination).

ITEM	NEW AMOUNT	OLD AMOUNT
Income limit for one person.	\$ 1,331	\$ 1,291

CONTACTS

BEM CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

★Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – Food Stamp Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WtW – Welfare to Work, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, Other EP – Other Employment Programs.