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TO: **Income Maintenance Supervisors**
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Income Maintenance Staff
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators

FROM: Shawn Smith, Bureau Director
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DHS OPERATIONS MEMO

No: DHS 14-49

DATE: 11/24/2014

FS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BC+	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SC	<input type="checkbox"/>	CTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FSET	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUBJECT: Processing Telephonic Applications from Offenders

CROSS REFERENCE: MEH [6.9](#), [2.2](#); BC+ [2.4](#), [3.6](#), [25.2](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to announce the implementation of a new process for accepting telephonic applications from offenders being released from state prisons.

BACKGROUND:

Upon release from prison, many offenders are eligible for BadgerCare Plus (BC+) — as parents/caretakers or as childless adults — or for Elderly, Blind or Disabled (EBD) Medicaid (MA). In order to prevent a gap in medical or pharmacy coverage upon the offender's release, the Department of Health Services (DHS) will accept telephonic applications for health care from offenders nearing their date of release.

Under current policy, an individual residing in jail or prison is not eligible for BC+ or MA, unless he or she is an inpatient in a hospital. Incarcerated applicants on house arrest, or certain Huber participants, described in the BadgerCare Plus Handbook ([2.4](#)), are not considered inmates for purposes of eligibility. They are not impacted by the process outlined in this Operations Memo.

NEW PROCESS:

Inmates who have a definitive release date may apply for health care benefits by calling their income maintenance (IM) agency on or after the 20th day of the month before the month of release. The application must be processed at the time of the initial call. The applicant must be allowed to sign the application telephonically.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) will allow the applicant up to an hour of telephone time to complete the application process. DOC staff will assist the applicant in preparing for the application and interview and identifying the correct consortium to call.

When applicants need assistance from DOC with completing the application and interview process, DOC staff will inform the IM worker that they are assisting with the application.

Eligibility will begin the first of the month in which the applicant is released, but providers are prohibited from billing Medicaid/BadgerCare Plus for any services while the applicant is still incarcerated. The first day that a member can receive Medicaid/BadgerCare Plus-covered services is the day of release.

➤ **Note:** A pre-release applicant may not apply for FoodShare prior to release. He or she will need to contact the consortium after release to request this benefit.

VERIFICATION:

As with other applications, most verification for health care can be completed using current data exchanges, but if additional verification is needed, a Verification Checklist will be generated. The verification due date will be set using the normal 30-day processing timeline. The following two verification items are handled differently for pre-release applications:

Earned income When processing applications from applicants whose only source of income is through employment inside a prison — in either DOC or Badger State Industries (BSI) jobs — DHS has already received verification that the maximum possible earnings in these positions are below program limits, so the worker does not need to further verify.

Applicants with sources of income in addition to DOC or BSI income are required to verify the income from employment within the prison, in addition to verifying the other income sources.

Date of Release When processing an application with DOC assistance, the DOC staff may verbally verify the release date of the applicant.

If the release date is not verbally confirmed by a DOC staff member as part of an assisted application, the worker will verify the discharge date by searching for the applicant on the WI DOC Offender Locator site: <http://offender.doc.state.wi.us/lop/>. The worker should enter the name and birth year, select “incarcerated,” and click the “Perform Search” link at the bottom of the page.

Once results are found, click on the applicant's name, then view the "Status" tab. Use the date listed as "Mandatory Release/Extended Supervision Date" to verify the reported release date.

Note: Actual release dates are typically on the Tuesday prior to the Mandatory Release/Extended Supervision Date. For this reason, the reported release date is considered to be verified as long as it is no more than a week prior to the Mandatory Release/Extended Supervision Date.

If the reported release date is later than the Mandatory Release/Extended Supervision Date, or is more than a week prior to the Mandatory Release/Extended Supervision Date, DOC staff will need to verbally verify the date, or the applicant will need to mail, fax, or email proof of the release date.

ADDRESSES:

If benefits are confirmed open within 10 days of release, the offender's address after release should be entered on the "General Case Information" page in CARES Worker Web (CWW). If benefits are confirmed prior to 10 days of his or her release, the address of the correctional facility should be entered on the "General Case Information" page. The Notice of Decision, as well as the ForwardHealth Identification Card, will then be sent to the correctional facility, and the offender will have the card when he or she is released. During the interview, the worker must also collect the address that the applicant will live at upon release and update the address on the case within 10 days of the release date. The effective month should be updated to the month of release.

FORWARDHEALTH IDENTIFICATION CARDS:

If an applicant's benefits have been open for any health care program in the past, but the applicant no longer has a ForwardHealth Identification Card, he or she must request a new card

from Member Services at (800) 362-3002. The IM worker processing the telephonic application must check interChange (iC) to see if the offender has had previous eligibility. If the offender has had previous eligibility, the offender should be instructed to call Member Services at least one day after the benefits are confirmed to request a new card. A new card should not be requested until the new address has been sent to iC in the nightly batch run. DOC will allow the applicant to make this second call after completing the application to request a new card, and DOC will hold any cards issued until the offender's release. At the time the offender is released, DOC will distribute any cards issued as part of either this process or the inpatient inmate initiative.

LOCAL/COUNTY JAILS:

The process outlined in this memo was established in conjunction with DOC. However, the same process may be used for processing applications from offenders in local and county jails.

Some IM agencies currently have effective processes set up for expediting application processing for applicants released from local facilities. The IM agencies should work in partnership with the local/county jails to establish a process that works best for them.

CARES:

There are no CARES changes associated with this process change.

CONTACTS:

BEPS CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

*Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, BC+ – BadgerCare Plus, SC – SeniorCare, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, FSET – FoodShare Employment and Training.

DHS/DHCAA/BEPS/FM