



North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance
Recipient Services EIS

1985 Umstead Drive – 2512 Mail Service Center - Raleigh, N.C. 27699-2512
Courier Number 56-20-06

Michael F. Easley, Governor

January 31, 2001

Subject: Combined MA/FS Pilots

Dear County Director of Social Services:

Both the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are challenging states to enroll more families and children in Medicaid and Food Stamps. Both agencies want to ensure that eligible individuals are enrolled and have access to the available programs. In response to this, staff from the Division of Medical Assistance and Division of Social Services met to discuss how to increase enrollment in both Medicaid and Food Stamps while streamlining the intake and eligibility process for both programs.

As a result we are asking counties to brainstorm and develop a means by which this can be done. In lieu of requiring families to complete two applications and sit through two interviews, we believe Medicaid or NCHC applications can be used for food stamp applications and vice versa. Our challenge to you is to pilot such a process that benefits families and your agency. We would share the results of your pilot with other agencies who may wish to adopt your methods.

The advantages of this process include increasing enrollment in both programs, streamlining the application process for the client and worker, allowing staff to use the same verifications for both programs, and allowing for outreach to more potentially eligible families.

In an effort to increase the benefits to families in need of assistance, we encourage you to take advantage of the similarities between Medicaid and Food Stamps. Much of the same information collected for Medicaid is collected for Food Stamps. Information collected for both Medicaid and Food Stamps includes demographic data such as name, address, relationship, age, living arrangement, marital status, social security number, and citizenship status. Both programs also collect information on income and resources.

Uncommon elements of eligibility for each program can be easily collected through the use of a one-page addendum to the base application.

The goal of this pilot is to reach those families who have not previously benefited from both programs and who are potentially eligible. A successful pilot would make the process for getting these benefits more family friendly for all recipients. Although differences exist between Medicaid and Food Stamps, the similarities will ease your task of bringing the two programs together.

Providing North Carolina families with benefits they need and for which they qualify is our goal. There is no one size fits all. Therefore, the need for such a pilot is long overdue. Each individual county can determine what works best to achieve this goal.

Your pilot may be developed in most any manner your county deems feasible for success. Your pilot may be limited to applications in which all household members are applying for both Medicaid and Food Stamps. This prevents the need to request information from household members not applying for assistance, which could be perceived as discouragement. Your pilot may only target MAABD households or Family and Children's Medicaid. The choice is yours. Regardless of whom you choose to target and how you develop your pilot, if it results in serving more eligible families, we encourage your participation.

If changes occur in eligibility requirements in either program during your pilot, you may need to change your pilot accordingly. Send an addendum to your pilot to explain the change.

The Medicaid Program Representatives will be the primary contact to assure the plan is working. However, if you have a question regarding food stamp policy, those questions should be referred to the Program Integrity Representatives.

We are excited about the potential benefits resulting from this pilot project and look forward to hearing from you. We would like for counties who wish to participate in this project to complete the attached form indicating interest with a brief outline of the county's plan. Return to the Division of Medical Assistance by March 1, 2001.

Sincerely,

Paul Perruzzi, Director
Division of Medical Assistance

E.C. Modlin, Director
Division of Social Services

