



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

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Dennis W. Streets, Director

Michael F. Easley, Governor

Dempsey Benton, Secretary

July 31, 2008

Re: Four-Day Work Week

Dear County Director of Social Services:

In the advent of the rising fuel and other costs, some counties have indicated their boards are considering moving to a four-day work week and closing their agencies one day a week. The purpose of this letter is to address several issues related to Medicaid and the Special Assistance for Adults Program, including the SA In-Home Program, that must be considered as the county contemplates this move.

**Medicaid**

Medicaid regulations have specific requirements that are in Administrative Rules 10 NCAC 21B 0208 (Mandatory Use of Outreach Locations) and 10 NCAC 21B 0209 (Hours for Accepting Financial and Medical Assistance Applications) and the Alexander Exit Plan. Below is an outline of several issues that need careful consideration as they may impact our compliance with administrative rules. We will use Friday as the non-work day in the considerations below.

1. The EIS shuts down at 5:30 each night so that batch jobs can be run and the system available by 7 a.m. the next morning. Currently workers are not able to key information into EIS after 5:30 p.m. We are working with DIRM to determine if extended hours may be possible, but at this time have no firm answer.
2. With approval from DMA, DIRM can adjust the EIS system for a county to have Fridays as a non-work day. This will change some of the reporting and time deadlines and may result in the county missing some important deadlines. These counties must manually calculate timely notice and other deadlines each month. The MPRs will monitor timely performance. Pullcheck and MA cutoff deadlines will not change. They are on the state work schedule.

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3. Timely notice deadlines will be affected. These would no longer be uniform across the state and may also result in giving additional benefits to some recipients when they are not terminated timely. The county dss would need to track their own deadlines. DMA will monitor to determine whether this affects a large number of clients and whether this may result in chargebacks to the county for the extra month of Medicaid eligibility.
4. Counties who change to a four-day work week will most likely increase failures on the Actual Report Card. Supervisors must monitor this process carefully, including a review of applications that exceeded processing time on the report card. The county must ensure that the caseworkers are following correct policy and requirements for application denials and exclusion of time. This information must be provided to the MPR.
5. The county dss must maintain the same number of operating hours as in February of 2002. For example, if a county had hours of operation Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., they are operational for 45 hours. When reducing to a four-day work week, the county must be operational 11 hours and 15 minutes each day to achieve 45 hours per week.
6. Hours of operation at the outstations must be the same as those at the local department of social services. Outstation workers are employees of the DSS.
7. The county must accept courtesy applications from other counties that are taken on Fridays, especially those from hospital and mandatory outstations. Courtesy applications should not be routinely taken in other counties for individuals who come in simply because the county of residence is closed on Fridays.
8. Transportation must be available for all recipients, including dialysis patients. Dialysis patients are usually on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule. If the county is providing transportation for these recipients on Friday now, they must accommodate this schedule in the future. This could result in the county paying another provider to cover for Fridays.
9. The county dss is responsible for notices to clients via signs at the dss offices, outstations and other pertinent locations, newspaper notices, and other outreach strategies effective in the local community.
10. Requests for local hearings must be scheduled within five (5) calendar days of date of the request regardless of the number of days the county dss is open. For example, a hearing requested on Monday or Tuesday must be held by Thursday.

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**State/County Special Assistance (SA)**

1. The current Time Standard for processing SA applications found in 10A NCAC 71P.0604 and in SA policy, based on the traditional work week, will remain in effect. The Adult Program Representatives will monitor timely performance.
2. The Administrative Rules 10 NCAC 21B 0208 for hours of operation of the county dss as cited in #5 above would also apply to the SA program.
3. As with Medicaid, and cited in #7 above, counties must accept courtesy applications that were taken on the day that the dss for the county of resident is closed.
4. **5/10 Day Rule:** The five (5) calendar reporting period and ten (10) working day timely notice used for calculating overpayments and budgeting for changes in situation. DSS will need to track these times in order to budget correctly.
5. Timely notices will be based on the traditional workweek. Refer to #3 above for considerations of timely notices for the four-day workweek.

Please coordinate system timelines and notices with all applicable state agencies if your county moves toward a four-day work week.

Sincerely,

William W. Lawrence, Jr., M.D., Acting Director  
Division of Medical Assistance

Suzanne P. Merrill, Chief, Adult Services Section  
Division of Aging and Adult Services

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SPM:cu