North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance
Recipient Services EIS
801 Ruggles Drive
Hoey Building – 2nd Floor
2501 Mail Service Center - Raleigh, N.C. 27699-2501
Courier Number 56-20-06

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

L. Allen Dobson, Jr., M.D., Assistant Secretary
for Health Policy and Medical Assistance
(919) 855-4000

May 11, 2001

Dear County Director of Social Services:

The Division of Medical Assistance monitored the return of Medicaid Identification Cards for SSI recipients to the local Departments of Social Services by U.S. Postal Service. A survey conducted in the fall of 2000 identified the most common reasons for the return of the cards. Those reasons include: (1) the recipient moving and leaving no address, (2) the recipient moving and providing a forwarding address and (3) the card containing an insufficient address or the card being undeliverable as addressed.

In an attempt to improve on the successful and timely delivery of the cards to the recipients, DMA staff met with staff from Social Security. Proper formatting of the mailing address was identified as an area that could positively affect delivery of the cards. SSA staff agreed to distribute a formatting guideline, developed by EIS, statewide to all Social Security offices. The formatting guideline has been developed and shared with Social Security officials. A copy of the guideline is also enclosed.

Please distribute the formatting guideline to Income Maintenance Caseworkers to use as a reference for correctly entering addresses into EIS. We hope the use of this guideline will help to improve delivery of Medicaid Identification Cards for SSI and non-SSI recipients.

If you have any questions, please contact your Medicaid Program Representative or the Medicaid Eligibility Unit at 919-855-4000.

Sincerely,

Paul R. Perruzzi

PRP:rb

Enclosure

SSI/MEDICAID RECIPIENTS
ADDRESS FORMATTING IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY RECORD

I. BACKGROUND

The automated interface between Social Security and the state's Eligibility Information System (EIS) is vital for North Carolina's automated system that creates SSI Medicaid cases, maintains the cases, and generated benefits and notices. NC Medicaid uses information from a claimants SSI record to automatically create and update Medicaid for these recipients. The Medicaid card is the recipients proof of Medicaid eligibility and as such, it is critical that the recipient receive it timely each month. Social Security can do a lot to ensure Medicaid cards have the best possible address printed on them which, in turn, will have a positive impact on benefit delivery.

The state conducted a survey of counties in August, September and October 2000 to determine the reasons SSI Medicaid cards are returned to dss as undeliverable by the USPS. The most common reasons were:

> Moved, left no forwarding address
> Moved, with forwarding address
> Insufficient address or undeliverable as addressed

EIS uses the mailing address on the SSI record as the mailing address for the Medicaid card. EIS also uses special software to modify mailing addresses to United States Postal Service standards when we print Medicaid cards. USPS uses automated sorting as much as possible. Printing a standardized address on the Medicaid card allows the stat to automatically barcode and presort our mail, which improves delivery time. The state also receives an improved postage rate for barcoded, pre-sorted mail. When the Medicaid card has a non-standard address, the state cannot barcode it. The postage rate is higher and the card must be manually sorted and handled, which delays delivery to the recipient.

> The software may actually cause a different address to be printed than the address that is in the automated system. This occurs when the SSI address is not entered according to USPS standards.
>
> Example:
> This is the address on the SSI case.
>
> 1009A Jones Lane
> Newport NC 28570
>
> The word Lane is abbreviated to LN, which the USPS prefers. In this example , this is a small change which will not cause any problems with delivery.
>
> This is an example of the type of change the software may make when an address does not meet USPS standards.
>
> 1009 WESTLIE LANE – Street name is misspelled.
> Newport NC 28570
>
> If the software doesn't find a street name that matches the address in the system, it changes it to the street name that most closely matches the address in the system. In this situation, the address changes to:

1009 WESTVILLE LN
NEWPORT NC 28570

The software also changes the city name to match the zip code. If the address has an incorrect zip code for the city, the city name which is appropriate for the zip code prints on the card.

1009 WESTVILLE LN
NEWPORT NC 27609

This zip code is not correct for Newport as it is a Raleigh zip code. The Medicaid card will be printed with this address:

1009 WESTVILLE LN
RALEIGH NC 27609

The address displayed in the automated system does not change, only the printed address on the Medicaid card.

The following guidelines are intended to help ensure SSI recipient's Medicaid cards are delivered as quickly and accurately as possible.

II. EIS ADDRESS LIMITATIONS

EIS has two lines of address, plus city and state. The address lines are 18 characters long. SSA's system allows a much longer address, which sometimes creates a problem.

For Example:

Mary Smith
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
CITYXXXXXXXX NC   ZIP $_+$ 4

It is important that Social Security staff limit the street address lines to 18 characters. If there are more than 18 characters, anything following the 18th character will not print on the recipients Medicaid card, which will likely make the card undeliverable.

When an SSI claimant has a representative payee, EIS does not include the payee's name as part of the mailing address. However, the Medicaid case does use the SSI mailing address for the Medicaid card, even when it is the payee's address.

III. ADDRESS FORMATTING INSTRUCTIONS

A.   Use standard USPS abbreviations, even if there is space for the word to be spelled out.

B.   Do not use any punctuation within the address.

C.   Do not leave space in the address between the street number and an apartment number that is a letter.

D.   If an address requires two lines, the street address should be on the line right above the city and state. Add apartment numbers, building numbers, and any other information on the line above the street address.

The following are some examples of correctly and incorrectly formatted addresses.

CORRRECTLY FORMATTED	INCORRECTLY FORMATTED	WHY IS IT INCORRECTLY FORMATTED
123C Jones Ct	123 Jones Ct Apt C	Do not leave space between the street address and the apartment number that is a letter.
Apt 123 456 Jones Ct	456 Jones Ct Apt 123	Need street address right above the city and state.
Apt 123 456 Jones Ct	456 Jones Ct Apt 123	Too Long
Lot 306 456 Jones Ct	456 Jones Ct Lot 306	Need street address right above city and state
Lot 306 456 Jones Ct	456 Jones Ct Lot 306	Too long
Shady MHP Lot 39 900 Stuckey Rd	900 Stuckey Rd Shady MHP Lot 39	Too long
Rt 2 Box 306A	Route 2 Box 306 A	Not abbreviated and there is a space between the box number and letter
C/O John Jones Rt 2 Box 306A	Rt 2 Box 306A C/O John Jones	Need street address on line right above city and state
C/O Fairmont UMC 2501 Clark Ave	C/O Fairmont United Methodist Church 2501 Clark Ave	3 line address- Even though UMC is a non-standard abbreviation, it allows the address to fit on two lines, with the street address on the line above city and state.
2437C Avent Ferry Rd	Pine Knoll Apts 2437 Aventferry Rd Apt c	3 line address Street name is really two words Need street address right above city and state
4D Hoke St	4 D Hoke St	There is a space between the street number and the apartment number
Box 80 242A Spruce St.	242A Spruce St Box 80	Too long
P O Box 37A	Post Office Box 37 A	Not abbreviated
1701P S Main St	1701 So Main ST Apt P	Non-standard abbreviation Need street address on line right above city and state
3691 Main St	3691 Main St Apts	Use street address, not name of apartment complex
Lot 23 211 Jones St	211 Evans MHP Lot 23	Need street address on line above city and state Use street address, not name of MHP
Rt 22 Box 35A	Rt 22	Need box number whenever there is a rural route
Box 41 1325 Henderson ST	1325 Henderson St Box 41	Too long

We have two good resources to use to get correct address information. The postal service issues a Publication 28-Postal Addressing Standards which includes all the standard abbreviations the USPS prefers. We also use the USPS website to validate addresses. The URL is www.usps.com, then click on Find Zip Codes. The Find Zip Codes function allows entry of an address to find a zip code. If the address is not in the correct format, often the software will return the correct format in the response.

IV. WHEN SSI/MEDICAID RECIPIENTS MOVE

There are difficulties with delivery of Medicaid cards when recipients move. Medicaid cards cannot be forwarded by USPS to a new address, so they are returned to the county department of social services. When this occurs, the recipient will not receive his or her Medicaid card until later in the month, if at all, and will not be able to have prescriptions filled until they receive the card.

SSI Medicaid recipients are instructed to report a change of address to the Social Security Administration. When the mailing address on the SSI record changes, this automatically updates the address on the Medicaid card.

It is imperative that when an SSI recipient reports a change of address to the Social Security Administration that the change is entered into the SSA system as soon as possible to ensure

that the Medicaid card is printed with the correct address and can therefore be delivered correctly.

When a claimant calls SSA to report a new address and mentions Medicaid, please ask if the claimant is an SSI recipient and update the address as soon as possible. Do not refer the individual to Medicaid as it is not necessary for the claimant to report the address separately to Medicaid and in fact the local county department of social services CANNOT update the address of an SSI recipient in a private living situation.

V. MEDICAID STATE OFFICE CONTACTS

Please feel free to call the Eligibility Information System (EIS) Unit at the Division of Medical Assistance anytime you have a question about how an address should be formatted. We will be glad to work with you to determine the best way to enter the address in SSA's system so EIS can process it for Medicaid. Call 919-855-4000 and ask for an EIS consultant.