State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services

California
Department of
Health Services

SANDRA SHEWRY
Director

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

September 9, 2005

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.: 05-30
ALL COUNTY WELFARE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY MEDS LIAISONS
CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE OF LOCAL HEALTH OFFICERS

SUBJECT: MEDI-CAL ELIGIBILITY FOR EVACUEES OF HURRICANE KATRINA
(RE: All County Welfare Directors Letters 89-92 and 92-08)

Hurricane Katrina has resulted in the evacuation of many people from the areas of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. These evacuees may arrive in California through formal FEMA processes, private assistance, or on their own. This letter is to advise counties of actions to take, based on existing Medi-Cal policies, for Hurricane Katrina evacuees who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina and who apply for Medi-Cal in California.

The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) may provide for a Section 1115 Expedited Model Waiver Application to provide Medicaid coverage for Hurricane Katrina evacuees. An ACWDL will be issued when the terms of that waiver are determined. This ACWDL provides interim guidance until any such CMS waiver is implemented.

Persons and families who are otherwise eligible for Medi-Cal, and who have been displaced to California as a result of Hurricane Katrina should be given Medi-Cal immediately if they meet all eligibility requirements. Hurricane Katrina evacuees must be treated as California residents if they intend to remain in California permanently, or for an indefinite period of time, including circumstances in which they are unsure when or if they will be able to leave California. Families affected by Hurricane Katrina must be placed in their own Medi-Cal Family Budget Units (MFBU), regardless of whether they are living in a shelter, someone's home, or with a relative.

1501 Capitol Avenue, Suite 71.4001, MS 4607, P.O. Box 997417
Sacramento, CA 95899-7417
(916) 552-9430 Fax: (916) 552-9478
www.dhs.ca.gov

Hurricane Katrina evacuees must meet all Medi-Cal eligibility requirements, including but not limited to linkage, income, and asset limits. Counties are required to determine eligibility as quickly as possible for Hurricane Katrina evacuees in accordance with established verification requirements, including IEVS income verification requirements and SAVE verification of immigration status.

In order to provide immediate access to Medi-Cal enrollment, those counties that are receiving Hurricane Katrina evacuees should redirect existing outstationed-eligibility workers to the place(s) where the evacuees are being received.

Hurricane Katrina evacuees may arrive in California having little or no documentation of income or assets as a result of the hurricane. In cases where an applicant is unable to provide the necessary verifications due to unusual circumstances such as Hurricane Katrina, Title 22, CCR, section 50167(c) provides that signed and dated affidavits can be used in place of standard verification documentation. In order to expedite the processing of Medi-Cal applications submitted by Hurricane Katrina evacuees, counties must use signed and dated affidavits in accordance with this regulation whenever verification documentation is not available. Applicants may sign an affidavit regarding any verification the county deems insufficient or not available.

In addition, Title 22 CCR Section 50172 provides:

"(a) The signature on the Statement of Facts shall be accepted as verification of the facts if both of the following conditions are met, except as specified in (c):

(1) The information required for establishing eligibility under these regulations is not available.

(2) The county department determines that the information provided on the Statement of Facts is sufficient to determine eligibility. If the information on the Statement of Facts is insufficient, the county department shall accept a signed statement, from the person completing the Statement of Facts, providing the necessary supplemental information.

(b) The county department shall state on the Statement of Facts that this is the only method of verification available, if this method of verification is used.

(c) The signature on the Statement of Facts shall not be accepted as verification of a person's SSN (Social Security Number), application for an SSN or for evidence of an SSN."

When evaluating the Medi-Cal eligibility of Hurricane Katrina evacuees, remember that federal disaster assistance in cash or in-kind furnished under federal statute specifically in conjunction with a federally-declared disaster is exempt, as explained in All County Welfare Directors Letters 89-92 and 92-08 and in Medi-Cal Eligibility Manual Procedure Section 9E.

If an eligible Hurricane Katrina applicant is on-site when the eligibility determination is completed, counties must do an EW15 to establish same day eligibility for access to care. Eligible Hurricane Katrina evacuees shall be provided with immediate proof of their Medi-Cal eligibility so they can obtain necessary health care services as soon as possible. If an EW15 is processed concurrent with the eligibility determination, it should be followed immediately by an EW20 to generate issuance of a BIC and establish ongoing eligibility.

When reporting Hurricane Katrina beneficiaries to MEDS on the EW20, their residence address at the time of the hurricane must be reported in the residence address field. Their California mailing address must be reported in the mailing address field.

Tracking Hurricane Katrina Medi-Cal Beneficiaries

Evacuees who meet the eligibility requirements for full scope Medi-Cal shall be granted Medi-Cal benefits under aid code 65. Aid code 65 is currently used for disabled SGA beneficiaries. Aid code 65 will be redefined so that counties can immediately begin establishing eligibility for full scope eligible Hurricane Katrina evacuees. A new aid code will be assigned for the disabled SGA beneficiaries. The new aid code for SGA beneficiaries will be available on MEDS beginning September 26, 2005. If counties receive an application from a Medi-Cal applicant who is eligible only for restricted scope Medi-Cal, place them in the aid code that applies to them and track these cases so they can be identified later if necessary.

SGA beneficiaries currently in aid code 65 will remain there until the new aid code is established and the beneficiaries are transferred to the new aid code. Counties will be notified of any existing SGA eligibles that need to be changed to the new SGA aid code. If any new SGA eligibility is established before the new SGA aid code is active on MEDS, counties will need to track these cases for movement into the new aid code once it is established.

Registration with FEMA

Individuals from the hurricane-impacted areas are being evacuated to other states through two channels: official commitments between FEMA and state and local government and unofficial arrangements made by private organizations and individuals. Evacuees who are

placed by FEMA will be registered in FEMA's system. It is important that evacuees placed through unofficial arrangements also register with FEMA. FEMA has a Teleregistry system for remote registration and evacuees can call 1-800-621-3362. If the individual has already registered with FEMA and has a registration number, please record the number in the case file.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact Ms. Angela Ajise at (916) 552-9523, or by email at Aajise@dhs.ca.gov.

Original signed by

Tameron Mitchell, R.D., M.P.H., Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch