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

DAVID MAXWELL-JOLLY
Director

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

October 1, 2009

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

Letter No.: 09-43

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN TERM OF ELIGIBILITY FOR AFGHAN SPECIAL IMMIGRANTS ON REFUGEE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The purpose of this letter is to:

- Provide county welfare departments with updated information about the term of Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) eligibility for Afghan Special Immigrants (SI); and
- Transmit a new restoration notice of action (NOA) for those SIs whose RMA eligibility was terminated after March 2009 based solely on the six-month time limit.

Change in the Term of Eligibility for Afghan Special Immigrants:

As discussed in All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) 08-53, Afghan SIs were originally given a six-month time-limited period of eligibility for RMA. Under a new federal law, as of March 11, 2009, the period of RMA eligibility for Afghan SIs has been extended to eight months (ORR State Letter 09-17). Eligibility for Afghan SIs that are currently on RMA and still within this new eight-month time limit, must have RMA eligibility extended to cover the eight-month time limit if they are otherwise eligible. Afghan SIs who lost RMA eligibility in March or

later based solely on the six-month time limit defined in ACWDL 08-53 must have eligibility restored with proper notice, if otherwise eligible, to assure that they are provided with eight months of RMA eligibility in accordance with the new federal law (see enclosed reinstatement NOA). Afghan SIs who lost eligibility prior to March 2009 based solely on the previous six-month RMA time limit are not eligible for additional RMA coverage.

The eight-month clock on RMA eligibility for Afghan SIs and their eligible family members that established their SI status prior to arriving in the U.S. (the consular process) begins on the date that the person is admitted to the U.S. as an Afghan SI. For Afghans adjusting to SI status domestically (within the U.S.) from some other immigration status such as visitor or student, the eight-month RMA clock begins on the date of grant of Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status. The date LPR status is granted is typically based on the earlier grant of Afghan SI status.

Example:

If an Afghan SI, who arrived in the U.S. on March 1, 2009, applied for RMA on March 1, 2009, he or she would be granted RMA from March 1, 2009 through October 31, 2009, if otherwise eligible. These dates represent eight months of RMA eligibility beginning on the date of entry to the U.S. as an Afghan SI.

NOAs:

Since Iraqi and Afghan SIs now both have eligibility terms equal to those of standard RMA cases, counties may now use the Approval NOA (DHCS 7111) and the Discontinuance NOA (DHCS 7110) that were provided in ACWDL 08-43. The Approval and Discontinuance NOAs provided in ACWDL 08-53 are now obsolete.

The RMA Reinstatement NOA enclosed with this letter should be used for Afghan SIs who lost eligibility based solely on the six-month time limit in or after March 2009.

Citizen/Alien Indicator Code

Iraqi and Afghan SIs should be coded Citizen/Alien Indicator Code "**R"** in the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System.

If you have any further questions regarding this letter please contact Mr. Jeffery Baca at (916) 552-9513 or by email at jeff.baca@dhcs.ca.gov.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Vivian Auble, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Division

Enclosure

MEDI-CAL
NOTICE OF ACTION

RESTORATION OF REFUGEE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (RMA) BENEFITS FOR AFGHAN IMMIGRANTS GRANTED SPECIAL IMMIGRANT STATUS

(County Stamp)

Notice date: _____

Case number: _____

Worker name/number: _____

Worker telephone number: _____

This affects: _____

_____

The federal government recently extended the period of Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) eligibility for Afghan Special Immigrants from six months to eight months. You may now receive RMA benefits for up to eight months beginning on the date that you were admitted into the United States as a Special Immigrant. Since your eligibility was terminated after 6 months you are entitled to extended RMA eligibility as follows:

☐ **Your RMA benefits will be extended for the month(s) of _____.**

☐ **Your benefits were restored retroactively for the month(s) of _____.**

You should call or write your county welfare worker right away if you have any questions about this action or if the information in the notice is not correct.

IMPORTANT: If there are any changes that could affect your eligibility such as changes in your income, property, medical condition, disability status, or household situation, please report them to the County Eligibility Worker listed above.

If you need a new Medi-Cal card, contact your County Eligibility Worker using the phone number at the top of this notice. Always present your BIC to your medical provider whenever you need care. This card is good as long as you are eligible for Medi-cal or RMA benefits. DO NOT THROW AWAY YOUR PLASTIC I.D. CARD (BIC).

The regulation which requires this action is located in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 50257.