STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN, Govern

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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January 16, 1990
Letter No.: 90-07

TO: All County Welfare Directors
All County Administrative Officers
All IEVS Contact Persons

SUBJECT: SECOND CONTACTS - REQUESTS FOR VERIFICATION/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During the post implementation review process for the Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS), State reviewers have noted an increase in state hearing decisions in favor of the applicant/recipient because the county did not properly document additional client contact attempts before denying or discontinuing Medi-Cal eligibility due to lack of information, noncooperation or loss of contact.

Based on these findings, for IEVS cases only, it was suggested that the additional contact attempts be in writing. This change would result in two different client contact policies; one policy for IEVS-related requests for verification/information, and one policy for other requests for verification/information.

However, to ensure consistency, save staff time and avoid unnecessary hearings, the following procedures for all Medi-Cal cases has been established:

First Contact

When the eligibility worker (EW) needs to contact the client for additional information, verification, or other related purposes, the date, method of contact, and result of the contact must be documented in the case file (For IEVS contact procedures see Medi-Cal Eligibility Procedures Handbook, Article 21-D 3, and 21-E. 6 and 7).

Second Contact

1. When an applicant/recipient fails to respond to the first contact by the requested deadline, the EW shall conduct a second contact, either by telephone (See Telephone Contact Guideline) and/or written notice (Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Sections 50165 and 50175), and document this extra effort in the file.

2. The written notification should include the date of the prior (initial) client contact and the requested information/verification, the time frame for responding to this second notification, and the consequences

for not contacting the county or providing the requested information within the allotted time.

3. If the second contact also results in no cooperation or response, then the EW shall initiate the denial/discontinuance process as outlined in Section 50175. If the case goes to hearing, the county shall ensure that the verbal and written position statements reflect the county's repeated attempts to assist the client in providing essential information, and the county's determination that good cause did not exist for the client's failure to submit the needed information on time.

"Reasonable" Telephone Contact Attempts Guidelines

Counties have requested clarification on what constitutes a "reasonable attempt" to contact the client when a telephone contact is the preferred option of the county. The following guideline is provided:

> When placing the call , if the EW is unable to speak directly with the client and no responsible person* is available to take a message, or if there is no answer, document the attempt in the casefile and try again within the next 24 hours. If there is no contact within the 24 hour period, then send a written notice as outlined in #1 above. Document these extra efforts and the dates in the case file.

* A responsible person could include the client's spouse, adult family members, a reliable babysitter or other such responsible member of the household. We do not recommend leaving messages with children or anyone the EW perceives is not responsible enough to ensure that the message will be given to the client.

If you have any further suggestions or questions regarding this letter, please contact Maggie Roggero at (916)324-4966 or Tony Plescia at (916)324-0650.

We hope these contact procedures will help to standardize county practices and improve fair hearing decisions in this area.

Sincerely,

Original signed by,

Frank S. Martucci, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch

cc: Medi-Cal Liaisons
Medi-Cal Program Consultants
DHS IEVS Liaisons
DSS IEVS Liaisons

Expiration Date: January 16, 1991