STATE OF CALIFORNIA--HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY

PETE WILSON, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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December 31, 1996

Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch Information Letter No.: I-96-37

TO: All County Welfare Directors
All County Administrative Officers
All County Medi-Cal Program Specialists/Liaisons

DRUG ADDICTION AND ALCOHOLISM (DA&A): TOLL-FREE PRERECORDED MESSAGE FOR TERMINATED SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME/STATE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT (SSI/SSP) RECIPIENTS

Ref.: All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) Nos. 96-23, 96-30, 96-52, and 96-65
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch Information Letter No. I-96-28

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information regarding a prerecorded message that is on a toll-free telephone number which will be temporarily accessible to terminated DA&A SSI/SSP disabled cash recipients. This letter also informs you of the potential need to flag any Medically Needy Only (MNO)-Disabled cases that is denied or discontinued because DA&A was material to the disability determination.

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER

Per ACWDL 96-65, terminated SSI/SSP DA&A recipients will become Ramos cases. All SSI/SSP cessation of disability cases which includes the DA&A cases will be identified with a payment status code of N07. The State receives State Data Exchange information from the Social Security Administration on a daily basis which includes information on cases with payment status code of N07. The State will send a Notice of Action, Discontinuance of SSI/SSP Medi-Cal--No Longer Disabled (Notice Type 22) to all cases identified with such a payment status code.

Notice Type 22 will give the former SSI/SSP recipient various information, i.e., about how to obtain Medi-Cal through another program and about their State appeal rights regarding the discontinuance of the SSI/SSP-based Medi-Cal. The notice will also include the toll-free telephone number for noticed individuals to call if they want additional information about the changes contained in their notice. The toll-free line will provide a selection menu and the caller

can choose under the Medi-Cal option, a message regarding the DA&A changes (see Enclosure). The message will be available in both English and Spanish and will provide an explanation of:

- why Medi-Cal benefits are being terminated;
- what the client needs to do to continue his/her Medi-Cal benefits; and
- what a State Administrative Law Judge will be able to determine if a state hearing is requested on the termination of Medi-Cal benefits.

Since the toll-free line has been installed to give information which is specific to SSI/SSP recipients who are terminated because DA&A was material to the disability determination, it will only be available for the months of December 1996 through February 1997. We will have the Public Inquiry and Response Unit of the California Department of Social Services monitor the volume of these calls to assist us in determining if the toll-free number will need to be continued beyond February 28, 1997.

FLAGGING DA&A CASES

We are advising counties to flag, keep a list, or other means of identifying cases which were denied or discontinued and DA&A was material to the disability determination. This advice is given for precautionary measures in case federal law on treatment of DA&A should be amended or legal action is taken in the future where these cases may need to be re-reviewed. It would be advisable to flag these cases until January 1, 1999.

If you should have any concerns or questions about the above information, please call Marie Taketa of my staff at (916) 657-1250.

Original signed by

Frank S. Martucci, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch

Enclosure

ENCLOSURE

PRE-RECORDED MESSAGE FOR TERMINATED SSI DA&A RECIPIENTS

On March 29, 1996, a new federal law was passed that no longer allows anyone whose disability is based mainly on drug addiction and/or alcoholism to receive SSI disability benefits or Medi-Cal. The new law states that these benefits must end by January 1, 1997.

If you feel that you should continue to get SSI disability cash benefits, you **must** call or go to your nearest Social Security office right away and let them know.

You may still be eligible for Medi-Cal for other reasons. This includes having a disability other than drug addiction or alcoholism. To continue to receive Medi-Cal, you **must** apply at your nearest county welfare department. Just fill out all of the forms you received in the mail with your Medi-Cal Notice of Action. Then take them to the county welfare office that is nearest to where you live, or send them to the address of the county welfare office shown on your Medi-Cal Notice of Action right away.

You may also ask for a State hearing on the stopping of your SSI-based Medi-Cal. But, the judge who hears your case can only decide whether your Medi-Cal benefits were correctly stopped because your SSI disability cash benefits stopped. The judge cannot decide whether Social Security correctly determined that you are no longer disabled.

If you still want to ask for a State hearing to decide whether your SSI-based Medi-Cal was correctly stopped, you need to fill out the form entitled "Your Right to Appeal this Action". This form was sent to you with your Medi-Cal Notice of Action and the address of where to mail it is right on the form. Or, you may request an appeal over the phone by calling toll-free at 1-800-952-5253.

If you request a hearing before the date that Medi-Cal is going to stop, you will normally receive Medi-Cal until the scheduled hearing.

Save your Medi-Cal Benefits Identification Card. You can use the same card again if you get Medi-Cal later.