

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

714/744 P STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

March 17, 1988

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Letter No.: 88-19

SUBJECT: PERSONS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 21 AND 22 WHO RESIDE IN
MENTAL INSTITUTIONS

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the eligibility criteria for persons who enter a mental institution prior to age 21 and are continuously institutionalized and receiving inpatient psychiatric care past their 21st birthday. Pursuant to Title 22, Section 50273, California Code of Regulations (CCR), formerly the California Administrative Code, such persons are not ineligible due to institutional status until their 22nd birthday. However, all other eligibility criteria, including linkage, must be met once a person reaches age 21 or eligibility does not continue.

For these types of cases, a disability evaluation request should be initiated prior to the beneficiary's 21st birthday. Sufficient time should be allowed to permit a disability decision before the individual becomes 21 years of age as, once the age limit is passed, aid cannot be continued pending the decision unless other linkage exists. In addition, a person found disabled will remain eligible following release from the institution thereby assuring continuity of care as well as minimizing the potential financial burden on the county for medication, therapy, and other treatment through the county program.

Referral of cases for disability evaluation prior to the 21st birthday will minimize discontinuance. Early referral will also result in a reduced number of hearing cases for persons who allege disability after their 21st birthday.

You should be aware that MEDS will not issue Medi-Cal cards under a medically indigent child aid code (82 and 83) beginning the month following the individual's 21st birthday. It should also be noted that aid code 53 is inappropriate for use in these cases as that aid code is restricted to medically indigent adults who reside in skilled nursing or intermediate care facilities and not psychiatric institutions. Likewise aid code 81 is only to be used for aid paid pending a timely requested hearing and will not

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generally be used in institutional cases. County use of an inappropriate aid code to force card issuance for non-linked individuals between 21 and 22 years of age who reside in a mental institution will be considered a quality control error. Considering the high cost of care in such facilities, an error of this type would significantly affect the State's payment error rate.

If you have any questions, please contact Toni Bailey at (916) 324-4967.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Frank S. Martucci, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch

cc: Medi-Cal Liaisons
Medi-Cal Program Consultants

Expiration Date: February 28, 1989