STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND WELFARE AGENCY

PETE WILSON, *Governor*

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To: All County Welfare Directors
All County Administrative Officers

Letter No.: 95-53

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS: ISSUANCE AND VERIFICATION

Ref.: Supersedes All County Welfare Directors Letter No. 81-43, 88-47, 95-44

This purpose of this letter is to update and clarify the Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch's policy regarding incorrect or fraudulent Social Security Numbers (SSNs) entered into the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data Systems (MEDS) and verification of SSNs for newborns. This letter also includes information about the Social Security Administration's (SSA) policy regarding issuance of SSNs.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER VERIFICATION

Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Section 50168 provides, in part, that the county welfare department must obtain verification of the SSN (or evidence that the application for a SSN has been made) within 60 days of the initial Medi-Cal application, but not necessarily prior to approval of eligibility. Subsection (B) states that SSA district office notification must be viewed as confirmation that the person has applied for a SSN or as evidence of application for a SSN. This documentation is usually a copy of a SS-5 Application for a Social Security Card or a MC 194 referral form annotated by a SSA official to indicate that an application for a SSN has been submitted. The EW must, at the very least, document in the case file that such verification was viewed and appeared to be genuine. It is preferable, however, that such verification be photocopied for the file.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ISSUANCE

To get a SSN, individuals are required to show evidence that establishes their age, identity, and lawful resident status.

SSA issues two kinds of SSNs:

1. Work Authorized SSN.
2. Non-Work SSN.

Non -Work SSN is for an individual who is an alien not authorized to work. He/she can apply for a SSN by submitting evidence that establishes his/her age, identity, lawful alien status and a valid need for a SSN. SSA will not assign a SSN or process an SS-5 for the following individuals:

- An individual who does not submit evidence of age, identity, and when applicable, United States citizenship/lawful alien status.
- An undocumented alien.
- An individual who submits questionable or fraudulent documents.

An individual seeking full-scope Medi-Cal, who does not have a verified SSN or proof of application for a SSN, should be referred to SSA to apply for a number. Under current policy, only applicants requesting full scope Medi-Cal benefits are required to provide a SSN as a condition of eligibility. If an applicant indicates that he/she has a SSN but lost it, the applicant must be sent to SSA to request a duplicate. If the individual has more than one SSN, he/she should be referred to SSA with a MC 194 form showing all the SSNs. **Under no circumstances should an Eligibility Worker knowingly submit an incorrect or fraudulent SSN to MEDS.**

NEWBORNS

If a woman is receiving Medi-Cal in the month of delivery, regardless of which program she is eligible for, the infant born to her will automatically be eligible for Medi-Cal even if the mother has not obtained a SSN for the infant. Once the mother contacts the eligibility worker (EW) to report the birth of the newborn (who is a United States citizen), the EW must inform the mother that a SSN will be required for the infant by the age of one year. In the interim, MEDS will assign a pseudo SSN to the newborn. If the mother provides the infant's SSN prior to one year of age, the infant's real SSN should be recorded and used.

Federal regulations regarding application for SSN (Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 422.103) were amended in 1990. At the parent's option, federal regulations allow a parent to request a SSN at the time that hospital personnel is obtaining information for birth registration. SSA revised the form SSA-2853-OP3, "MESSAGE FROM SOCIAL SECURITY", and it can be used as evidence of SSN application when signed by a hospital official.

A woman not on Medi-Cal, but applying for Medi-Cal benefits for her newborn, must provide all required documentation of the infant's eligibility and is required to supply a SSN or evidence that an application has been made for a SSN for the newborn.

If you have questions, please contact Ms. Ana Ramirez at (916) 657-1401 or your SSA liaisons. Questions regarding the Continued Eligibility program should be directed to Ms. Lisa Reagan at (916) 657-3719.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Frank S. Martucci, Chief
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch