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TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS Letter No.: 09-46  
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS  
ALL COUNTY MEDI-CAL PROGRAM SPECIALISTS/LIAISONS  
ALL COUNTY HEALTH EXECUTIVES  
ALL COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON RETROACTIVE ELIGIBILITY FOR REFUGEE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The purpose of this letter is to provide the county welfare departments with updated information regarding retroactive eligibility requirements for Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA).

**Retroactive Eligibility for Refugee Medical Assistance:**

The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement recently clarified that RMA eligible individuals are eligible for up to three months of retroactive eligibility to the same extent as are Medi-Cal beneficiaries, provided that:

- They apply within their RMA eligibility period.
- They meet all RMA eligibility requirements during any retroactive months.
- The three (or fewer) months of retroactive eligibility are within their RMA eligibility period.

**Example 1:**

If an individual with eight months of potential RMA eligibility either:

- Had a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) entry date of January 1, 2009, or
- Was granted asylum on January 1, 2009, or
- Adjusted to refugee or Special Immigrant status domestically (within the U.S.) from some other immigration status on January 1, 2009, and

applied for RMA on April 1, 2009 (including a request for retroactive eligibility), he or she would be granted RMA from January 1, 2009 through August 31, 2009 if otherwise eligible. In this case, retroactive RMA is available for the three months of retroactive eligibility that occurred prior to the date of RMA application.

**Example 2:**

If an individual with eight months of potential RMA eligibility either:

- Had a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) entry date of January 1, 2009, or
- Was granted asylum on January 1, 2009, or
- Adjusted to refugee or Special Immigrant status domestically (within the U.S.) from some other immigration status on January 1, 2009, and

applied for RMA on February 28, 2009 (including a request for retroactive eligibility), he or she would be granted RMA from January 1, 2009 through August 31, 2009, if otherwise eligible. In this case, retroactive RMA is available only for the one month of retroactive eligibility that occurred prior to the month of application that is within the RMA time-limited eligibility period.

**Example 3:**

If an individual with eight months of potential RMA eligibility either:

- Had a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) entry date of January 1, 2009, or

- Was granted asylum on January 1, 2009, or
- Adjusted to refugee or Special Immigrant status domestically (within the U.S.) from some other immigration status on January 1, 2009, and

applied for RMA on September 1, 2009 (including a request for retroactive eligibility), he or she would not be eligible for any retroactive or ongoing RMA benefits. In this case, neither retroactive nor ongoing RMA are available because the individual must apply within the eight-month eligibility period in order to be eligible for RMA benefits. In this example the individual applied after the eight-month RMA eligibility period has ended.

**Example 4:**

If an individual with eight months of potential RMA eligibility either:

- Had a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) entry date of January 1, 2009, or
- Was granted asylum on January 1, 2009, or
- Adjusted to refugee or Special Immigrant status domestically (within the U.S.) from some other immigration status on January 1, 2009, and

applied for RMA on January 15, 2009 (including a request for retroactive eligibility), he or she would only be eligible for ongoing RMA benefits, and would not be eligible for any retroactive RMA benefits. In this case, retroactive RMA benefits would not be available because the potential period of eligibility for this individual does not include any months prior to the month of application. Since the application date is in the same month as the USCIS entry date the individual would receive RMA eligibility beginning with the month of entry and would not be eligible for any retroactive months.

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

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:**

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