

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

14744 P Street
O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320
, 657-2941



February 12, 1997

TO: All County Welfare Directors
All County Administrative Officers
All County Medi-Cal Program Specialists/Liaisons
All County Outstationed Eligibility Worker Coordinators

Letter No.: 97-04

**OUTSTATIONED ELIGIBILITY WORKER (EW) PROGRAM PETITIONS AND
REPORTING UPDATE**

Ref.: All County Welfare Directors Letter Nos. 89-114, Unnumbered Letter Dated July 9, 1990,
91-25, 91-108, 92-16, 93-18, 94-23, 95-05, and 96-07

The purpose of this letter is to provide counties with information concerning the petitioning and reporting process for the Outstationing EW program. Outstationing, initiated under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA '90), has been in place for six years. The Department of Health Services (DHS) is pleased that counties' efforts to provide increased perinatal access to medical services has been successful.

OBRA '90 OUTSTATIONING

Petitioning:

Beginning with fiscal year (FY) 1994-95, funding for Outstationing has been included in the county's base budget. The County Administrative Directors are already aware of this change. In calculating the amount to include in counties' base budgets, DHS considered counties' reports of actual caseload figures and outstation activities. The counties are required to submit new petitions only for the sites which have not participated in the outstationing program in the past, and which presently meet the criteria for outstationing under OBRA '90. When adding sites, counties should be sure projected sites meet the original intent of the outstationing program so placement of an outstationed worker will result in quick determination of Medi-Cal eligibility for pregnant women and children born after September 30, 1983.

It is still mandatory that county welfare departments outstation EWs at Disproportionate Share Hospitals and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), unless it can be demonstrated that this is not administratively feasible to do so. As in the past, DHS's Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch (MEB) is sending a letter to FQHC and Disproportionate Share Hospitals to make them

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aware of the availability of the outstationing program and their obligation to contact the county indicating their interest. (See enclosure.) A copy of OBRA '90 Outstationing of Eligibility Workers (EW) Petition is enclosed with this letter. If your county needs more than one petition, please make additional copies.

PERINATAL OUTSTATIONING

Petitioning:

This funding is also included in the county's base budget. We do not anticipate any increase in funds for Perinatal outstationing for FY 1997-98. Therefore, once again, we are requesting counties to reevaluate their Perinatal outstationing program to assure that resources are being utilized appropriately and the number of applications supports the need for an outstationed worker.

Counties may modify their perinatal outstationing program (number of EW days/hours; discontinue/add sites) within their existing allocation if there is justification for the modification, such as, increase or decrease in projected number of applications. Modifications should be reviewed by MEB and noted in monthly outstationing report.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

It continues to be mandatory that counties submit statistical reports for outstationing activities for OBRA '90 as well as Perinatal programs. Report forms were simplified during FY 1995-96 requesting the minimal amount of data necessary to evaluate the efficiency of the program. We believe the new report forms reduce the time spent in data collecting for both county staff and DHS. Counties are required to submit reports monthly. A camera-ready copy of the reporting form is enclosed with this letter. Please, reproduce the form according to your needs. You may contact MEB for a "fresh" copy if needed.

Petition forms for FY 1997-98 are due to MEB no later than March 14, 1997.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for your excellent cooperation and hard work in implementing and maintaining the outstationing provisions of OBRA '90.

All County Welfare Directors
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If you have budget questions, please direct them to your administrative director. If you have any questions regarding the program policies, please contact Kveta Simon of my staff at (916) 657-2767.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

FRANK S. MARTUCCI, CHIEF
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch

Enclosures

OBRA '90--OUTSTATIONING OF ELIGIBILITY WORKERS (EW)
PETITION ENCLOSURE A

(Note: Complete this form for each new OBRA '90 Site where you are proposing to outstation workers and/or existing location where a new EW is justified.

County _____

Hospital/Clinic Name _____

Type of Facility:

Disproportionate Share Hospital _____ FQHC _____ Look-Alike Clinic _____

Indian Health Center _____ Other (Specify) _____

1. What is estimated total number of EW hours per month necessary to process applications from OBRA '90 targeted population?

2. How many EWs are needed to process OBRA '90 cases? _____
3. What is projected number of applications which will be processed at this location?

4. What is your county's FY 96-97 intake target?

5. What is estimated staff travel time to process applications at this location?
(Hours per month) _____
6. Please indicate which days outstationed worker will visit this site?
Circle days M T W Th F
7. How many hours on each day?

8. Describe what arrangements will be made to meet OBRA '90 mandates of having staff available during hours welfare offices are normally open, e.g., posting notices, etc.
9. Will facility staff be used to assist in Medi-Cal process, such as distribution of forms, scheduling interviews, etc? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, describe extent to which facility staff will be utilized.

10. Based on information received from facility, what is that primary language of potential applicants?

English _____% Spanish _____% Chinese _____% Vietnamese _____%

Other (Specify) _____%

11. Does your county currently have, or anticipate being able to hire sufficient bilingual staff to meet the needs of targeted population?

Yes _____ No _____

12. Please provide fiscal analysis of the incremental funding:

EXAMPLE:

(ESTIMATED OBRA App/Mo)
100% - (No. of Requested EWs) ÷ FY 96/97 Intake Target* = Incremental %

100% - (Question 3)
(Question 2) ÷ Question 4 = Incremental %

13. Describe mechanism counties will use to oversee the quality assurance of eligibility decisions by outstation staff.

Name of Facility Contact Person _____

Phone Number of Facility Contact Person _____

County Welfare Director's Signature _____

* Intake Target will be adjusted if it changes for FY 97-98.

COUNTY OF _____ MONTH _____ YEAR _____ Page ____ of ____

CLINIC NAME & ADDRESS	# APPLICATIONS TAKEN Pregnant Women	# APPROVALS Pregnant Women
Total		

County Contact Person

() _____
Telephone Number

SEND ONE COPY OF REPORT TO:

STATE OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch
Outstationed Eligibility Workers - OBRA 90 Coordinator
714 P Street, Room 1650
Sacramento, CA 95814

OBRA 90 OUTSTATIONING REPORT FORM

COUNTY OF _____ MONTH _____ YEAR _____

Page ____ of ____

CLINIC NAME & ADDRESS	# APPLICATIONS TAKEN Pregnant Women	# APPLICATIONS TAKEN Children Federal Poverty Level Programs	TOTAL # APPLICATIONS	TOTAL # APPROVALS
TOTAL				

County Contact Person

() _____
Telephone Number

SEND ONE COPY OF REPORT TO:

STATE OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch
Outstationed Eligibility Workers - OBRA 90 Coordinator
714 P Street, Room 1650
Sacramento, CA 95814

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

14744 P Street
P.O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320
(916) 657-2941



Dear Hospital/Clinic Administrator:

The purpose of this letter is to provide information about provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA '90) which mandated the outstationing of eligibility workers (EWs) at Disproportionate Share Hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Look-Alike Clinics and Indian Health Centers. The outstationed EWs accept and process Medi-Cal applications from pregnant women and children born after September 30, 1983.

Your facility/clinic was identified as a site which is eligible to participate in this program. In California, the county welfare departments have the responsibility to determine Medi-Cal eligibility.

The program mandating the outstationing of EWs offers many advantages to the facilities/clinics involved. As you may not be aware of the benefits of having an outstationed EW, we are writing directly to you.

Among the advantages of having an outstationed EW are:

- On-site Medi-Cal eligibility can make the application process easier for clients by allowing them to apply for Medi-Cal and receive services at the same location. Many clients who do not have access to an on-site eligibility worker do not apply for Medi-Cal for the following reasons:
 - They have problems getting to a local welfare office to apply for assistance because of excessive distance or inadequate transportation; and
 - They are unwilling to apply for assistance at welfare offices because of the perceived stigma associated with Medicaid's link to Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.
- Some clients who apply at the welfare office often do not complete the application process. They view the application form as long and complicated and do not understand documentation requirements. Pregnant women applying at welfare offices often do not receive coverage until late in the pregnancy due to failure to provide required documentation. Studies have shown the majority of clients applying at outstation locations complete the application process. This is partially due to the fact that it is more convenient, comfortable, and there is more time for the EW to answer questions.

- When a client applies for Medi-Cal at an on-site location, the eligibility determination usually occurs more rapidly than when the client applies at the welfare office. This often results in faster payment for the provider of service. Some of the reasons for the quicker eligibility determination are:
 - The on-site EW works cooperatively with clinic staff. If there is a problem related to the application process, follow-up can be done at the time the client comes in to receive services; and
 - EWs in outstation locations typically have smaller caseloads than workers in county welfare offices. As a result, more time is available to follow up with applicants.
- Clinics/hospitals with EWs outstationed have reported a decline in the costs of uncompensated care.

Many counties in California have implemented very successful outstationing programs. Both clients and clinics report increased satisfaction with the Medi-Cal application process at these sites. Outstationing of EWs has removed many barriers and increased the accessibility of Medi-Cal for pregnant women and children in California.

The following factors should be kept in mind concerning the outstationing of EWs:

1. In determining how to implement outstationing, the welfare agency will take into consideration such factors as projected number of applications from the targeted population, travel time involved, availability of EWs with language skills necessary for the targeted population, and other factors;
2. The number of hours an EW is assigned to an outstationed location varies according to the number of projected and actual applications. In high use areas, one or more workers may be assigned full time. In other areas, workers may be assigned only one per day per week or less; and
3. If the county social service agency determines that outstationing is feasible at your location, they will petition the State Department of Health Services (SDHS) for funding. If the SDHS approves the county's outstationing plan, EWs can be outstationed when the necessary appropriations are approved through the State budgetary process.

So that we may document our efforts to comply with the OBRA '90 outstationing mandate, we are asking your cooperation in completing the form enclosed with this letter and returning it to the address shown on the form by February 28, 1997. In addition to completing and returning the enclosed form to DHS, you must also contact your county welfare department to indicate your interest in outstationing.

If you have any questions about the information in this letter or general questions about OBRA '90 outstationing of EWs, please contact Kveta Simon of my staff at (916) 657-2767.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

FRANK S. MARTUCCI, CHIEF
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch

Enclosure

**OUTSTATIONING OF ELIGIBILITY WORKERS
INTEREST INQUIRY FORM**

NAME OF CLINIC/HOSPITAL _____

COUNTY _____

We are interested in pursuing the feasibility of having an eligibility worker located at this hospital/clinic. Please have county social services agency contact us to discuss outstationing.

Name of Facility Contact Person _____

Phone Number of Facility Contact Person _____

Comments: _____

NAME OF CLINIC/HOSPITAL _____

COUNTY _____

We are not interested in having an eligibility worker located at this hospital/clinic to take Medi-Cal applications for pregnant women and children born after September 30, 1983 for the following reason(s):

Name of Person Completing Form _____

Title of Person Completing Form _____

Telephone Number of Person Completing Form _____

Return Completed Form to:

Department of Health Services
Medi-Cal Eligibility Branch
Attention: Kveta Simon
714 P Street, Room 1650
P.O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320

FAX No.: (916) 657-3224