



# September 2011 On Target

## September '11 Contributors

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[Click here to link to the Family Services Manual](#)



## Quality Assurance Panel

On the last Monday of each month, the Quality Control (QC) unit conducts a statewide video conference (QA Panel meeting) to review the errors they have identified. The concept of the meeting is for staff in branch offices, QC, SSPAT, policy staff, training staff, and all connected parties, to meet and talk about what caused the error and how to prevent it in the future.

Although to a worker this may feel intimidating, those who have attended have provided feedback quite to the contrary. Workers and others attending walk away with a better understanding of what may have caused the errors, how to prevent them in the future, and the efforts QC makes to avoid citing errors to begin with. And- no one *ever* gets yelled at or singled out in any way. In fact, we need your help and perspective because increasing accuracy is a statewide effort!

QC staff strive to make the meeting as informal as possible, and policy staff are available as a resource and to provide clarification as needed. It is our goal for the meeting and discussions to be meaningful for those attending.

Even if you don't have an error, we encourage you to attend the QA panels. It's a great way to find out what is happening around the state, clear up misinformation, learn about why we have reviews and connect with your fellow workers around the state.

If you would like to attend, first talk to your manager, then contact one of the Quality Control managers, Susan Beckett or Lisa Barger-Fox, to access copies of the cases to be discussed and locations for the video conference. Local staff are invited to attend at our new location: 3541 Fairview Industrial Drive in Salem. Hope to see you at a QA panel meeting soon!

*Quality Control*

## Check Out The New Change!!!

Food and Nutrition Services ( FNS) has given us the approval for this years Standard Utility Allowance. The FUA and IUA have decreased slightly while the LUA and TUA have increased slightly. The standard deduction has gone up for all households so we do not anticipate a lot of cases having reduction in benefits. No notice needs to be sent to clients as this is considered a mass change and there will be a media release done.

The new standards are as follows:

- . Full Utility Allowance (FUA) = \$395
- . Limited Utility Allowance (LUA) = \$288
- . Telephone Utility Allowance (TUA) = \$ 53
- . Individual Utility Allowance (IUA) = \$ 47



The new standards are reflected in FSUP effective October 1, 2011. There will be changes to the countable and adjusted income standards. The maximum allotment amount for SNAP households will remain unchanged.

\*\*\*Remember to change your Combined Standards cheat sheet at your desk. (Form 5530)\*\*\*

## SSP Medical and Educational Benefits from the Veterans' Administration

SSP Medical Policy often receives questions about how to count educational income from the Veterans' Administration (VA). Educational income received by the VA is treated the same as any other non-Title IV income students receive.

**Step 1:** Determine how much educational income is received by the student.

**Step 2:** Determine the amount of the allowable costs to be excluded. This includes determining what costs the VA is paying directly to the school. Any costs paid directly to the school by the VA would not be excluded from the educational income received by the client. For instance, under the Post-9/11 GI Bill a student may have all tuition and fees paid by the VA directly to the school. In this scenario you would not exclude the cost of tuition and fees from the educational income the student receives.

**Step 3:** Subtract the allowable exclusions. The remaining income is considered the countable income.

Remember: For OHP consider the actual income received and actual costs paid in the budget month. For all other SSP medical programs prorate the countable income over the period it is intended to cover.

**Example:** Sarah and her 16 year old child apply for medical benefits in October. Sarah is a student who is receiving VA educational benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Her VA educational benefits include a housing allowance of \$900 paid to her monthly and a \$500 book stipend paid to her in the first month of each term (September, January and April). All tuition and fees are paid by the VA directly to the school. The school website lists the costs for books as \$1275 for three terms. Sarah tells you she bought her books in September. The budget month is October. What is the countable educational income?

**Answer:** For MAA the total educational income for the school year is \$900 per month x 10 months per school year = \$9000 housing allowance + \$500 per term x 3 terms = \$1500 book stipend, for a total of \$10,500. Total allowable costs are \$1275. \$10,500 - \$1275 = \$9225/school year. To determine October countable income, prorate \$9225 over the 10- month school year. October countable income is \$922.50.

For OHP the income received in October is \$900. Total allowable costs in October are \$0. Countable education income is \$900.

## SSA Narration – best practice

You know how SSA screens are limited in the information they provide? And how changes occur on the screens with no record of when or why? And you can't print SSA screens. And you are very limited in what you can narrate.

Well, a recent suggestion from the field to re-examine the way workers narrate SSA income (SSI, SSB, SSD) has led to a new best practice recommendation. This recommendation will provide better information on the electronic case record (TRACS and Oregon Access), reduce uncertainty about the accuracy of a case, and at times reduce the need to call SSA for clarification!

The best practice explained below is simple and has been reviewed and accepted by the SSP and SPD Field Services units, the Medical and SNAP Program units, the Program Accuracy Team and Quality Control – so we all hope it helps!

Here are the details: Currently, workers narrate something like “\$674 verified through SSA records” for all SSA income whether it was verified by screens, by award letter or by a call to SSA. Here is what the narration might look like using the best practice suggestion:

- \* \$674, verif. SSA records – 9/15 (*this will only mean a data match*)
- \* \$674 SSI , verif. 9/15 benefit letter
- \* \$674, SSI, verif. 9/15 call to Jane X @ ###-####

Adding the date helps clarify what information was available at a specific point in time and reduces the mystery when information has changed, especially if the recipient has had a lot of changes since the case was certified.

A little more information about the source of the information (i.e. SSA records, benefit letter, phone call) will eliminate the vague narration and point whoever looks at the case in the right direction if they are trying to determine what was used for the SSA income verification.



The additional narration will not eliminate or avoid all errors, but it should reduce much of the confusion common on these cases which is a win-win for workers, reviewers, QC and anyone else needing to understand the situation and eligibility for benefits. Thank you to everyone who weighed in – especially Peggy Nahalka and her team at the Estacada SPD office for the original suggestion and Karen Gulliver for pursuing the suggestion through the full buy-in process!

*Self-Sufficiency Program Accuracy Team*

## Civil Rights Training Reminder



The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requires that all staff working with SNAP receive Civil Rights training at least once a year. In order to meet that requirement, there is an online class available for staff to take at their own convenience. The class takes about 15 to 20 minutes. In order to receive credit for the class you must read through all the information and answer all the questions. The online class can be accessed by going to Self Sufficiency staff tools and clicking on DHS Learning Center. After signing into the Learning Center check courses and registration. The class is listed as “Online: SNAP Civil Rights”.

*SNAP Policy Analysts*



# August 2011 Targeted SNAP Reviews

## 100% Accuracy Honor Roll

0201 Corvallis SSP	1211 John Day SPD	3005 Boardman SSP
0310 Canby SPD	1311 Burns SPD	3013 Hermiston SSP
0411 Warrenton ADS	1404 Multnomah Refugee Branch	3101 LaGrande SSP
0501 St. Helens SSP	1502 South Valley SSP	3111 LaGrande SPD
0511 St. Helens SPD	1513 Medford SSO	3112 Enterprise SPD
0702 Integrated Srvs SSP	1717 Grants Pass DSO	3211 Florence ADS
0911 Bend SPD	1811 Klamath Falls SPD	3301 The Dalles SSP
0913 LaPine SPD	2111 Toledo ADS	3311 The Dalles SPD
0914 Redmond SPD	2202 Lebanon SSP	3411 Hillsboro SPD
1201 John Day SSP	2311 Ontario SPD	3617 McMinnville ADS
	2911 Tillamook ADS	

## 90% or Better

98.00 West Eugene SSP	2002	95.00 Milton-Freewater SSP	3004	93.33 Newport SSP	2101
96.67 Astoria SSP	0401	94.00 D8 Processing Center	1503	93.33 Pendleton SPD	3011
96.67 Cottage Grove SSP	2003	93.48 Klamath Falls SSP	1801	93.33 Hillsboro SSP	3402
96.67 Albany SSP	2201	93.33 Baker City SPD	0111	92.00 North Bend SPD	0611
96.00 Albany ADS	2211	93.33 Estacada SPD	0314	92.00 Rosburg SSP	1001
96.00 West Portland ADS	2518	93.33 Roseburg SPD	1011	91.67 Burns SSP	1301
95.00 S Umpqua Center	1002	93.33 Medford SSP	1501	90.11 NE Processing Center	2803
95.00 Cave Junction SSP	1702	93.33 Rogue Family Center	1505	90.00 Teen Parent SSP	1406
95.00 Tillamook SSP	2901	93.33 Woodburn ADS	1911	90.00 Prineville SSP	1601
95.00 Pendleton SSP	3001	93.33 Cottage Grove ADS	2019	90.00 St. Johns SSP	2601

## October 1st changes for the SNAP program

Take note of the following changes listed below that will be taking effect October 1, 2011.

Reference the Family Service Manual [chapters](#) for further information.

- Chapter B was updated to reflect that households that are NED can be certified for 24 months as long as the case belongs to an SPD or AAA office. (SNAP-b.13, f.8, WG#7). While the rules takes effect October 1, these cases wont actually be able to be put in a 24 month cert until November 1st for any cert or recert.
- Chapter C was updated to reflect the change of income standard (165% for the FPL) for elderly individuals who are severely disabled and are trying to be a separate filing group from others in their household. (SNAP-c.4)
- Chapter D includes updates to the student eligibility criteria. Changes are specific to work study and unemployment. (SNAP-d)
- Chapter F will be updated to show new standards and updated utility allowances provided by the Food and Nutrition Service. (SNAP-f.2, f.25)



# August 2011

## Targeted Medical Reviews

### 100% Accuracy Honor Roll

0401 Astoria SSP	1301 Burns SSP	2101 Newport SSP
0501 St. Helens SSP	1402 New Market Theater	2202 Lebanon SSP
0701 Alberta SSP	1404 Multnomah Refugee Branch	2601 St. Johns SSP
0702 Integrated Srvs SSP	1503 D8 Processing Center	2801 NE Portland SSP
1002 South Umpqua Center	1504 W Medford Extension Office	3004 Milton-Freewater SSP
1101 Springfield SSP	1505 Rogue Family Center	3005 Boardman SSP
1102 Gateway Center	1603 Warm Springs SSP	3201 Florence SSP
1201 John Day SSP	1802 Lakeview SSP	3503 D2 ERDC Proc Center

### 90% or Better

97.50 North Salem SSP	2402	92.86 LaGrande SSP	3101	90.00 Prineville SSP	1601
97.14 D4 Processing Center	2203	92.31 Klamath Falls SSP	1801	90.00 McKenzie SSP	2001
96.67 SE Portland SSP	1401	92.00 Wash Cnty Proc Ctr	3404	90.00 Keizer SSP	2405
95.83 Metro Processing Ctr	1403	91.18 West Eugene SSP	2002	90.00 Tillamook SSP	2901
93.33 Woodburn SSP	1901	90.63 NE Processing Center	2803	90.00 Pendleton SSP	3001
93.33 Albany SSP	2201	90.00 Coos Bay SSP	0601	90.00 The Dalles SSP	3301
93.33 Ontario SSP	2301	90.00 Redmond SSP	0902	90.00	3302
		90.00 Medford SSP	1501		



**Didja Know??** When sending TPL/PHI information to OPHP for an HKC case, the e-mail address is “**INFO, OPHP**” NOT “OPHP”. The “OPHP” e-mail group includes the entire agency, including some non-secure addresses. Sending client information through this address can lead to confidentiality breaches and security risks.

If you have difficulty finding the **INFO, OPHP** address, please don't hesitate to contact your friendly Medical Policy Analysts at **SSP-POLICY, Medical!**

### SNAP Medical Deductions Course Link

Who is eligible for a medical deduction? What does it mean to have a cost? How do I know if a cost is allowable and how do I determine the amount that I will code on the computer for a medical deduction?

#	Date	Time	Status
19721	10/06/2011-10/06/2011	01:00 PM-04:30 PM	<a href="#">Register</a>

The e-mail address for SNAP questions is now Policy, SNAP ([SNAP.Policy@state.or.us](mailto:SNAP.Policy@state.or.us)).