

In the Loop

SNAP bonus award!

In case you haven't heard, the Oregon SNAP program was awarded over \$5 million in SNAP bonus money for improved processes in determining timely eligibility and increased participation in the SNAP program. Oregon was one of only six states to receive a monetary award for program access. Here is an excerpt from the governor's letter to DHS:

I want to take this opportunity to personally express my congratulations. I also want to say thank you.

As you know, making sure Oregonians have nutritious food keeps our neighbors healthy and puts money in local economies. These outcomes are more important than ever.

I am also impressed by your efforts and those of your partners to increase the number of seniors receiving SNAP benefits. Oregon recorded the third highest increase in the nation in reaching out to this population, and this challenge is one many states struggle with. I look forward to sharing Oregon's best practices for increasing the food security of our seniors with states across the country.



Many areas took time out to celebrate - see what the Baker City APD and SSP offices were up to by turning to the last page.

Congratulations to all of you! We are constantly impressed at the excellent work all the APD and AAA staff produce day after day. You are amazing. Thank you very much for all you do!

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Supporting APD/AAA Field structure by providing efficient, timely and accurate information through superior customer service.

Non categorical eligibility for SNAP

Agency staff: Good morning, this is Mary, how can I help you?

Caller: How much money can I have and still get food stamps?

Agency staff: If you live alone, the limit is \$1,679 gross income per month.

Right? Well, not really. In fact, agency staff very likely just gave a potential client wrong information and now the person will not apply for benefits to which they could be entitled.

Except for the dialogue, this happens in every office, every day. Maybe it is happening in person instead of on the phone, in either circumstance, staff are looking at the categorical income limit for SNAP only – they are completely forgetting about *non* categorical eligibility.

Cases which are not categorically eligible may still qualify for SNAP benefits after FSMIS applies the allowed deductions.

Let's take a family of three with gross income of \$3,000. In this scenario two family members receive a combined \$3,000 in SSD. They also have high shelter costs, a \$390 medical deduction and qualify for FUA. After FSMIS applies all the deductions, the household qualifies for SNAP benefits.

Here's another scenario: a household of one with gross income of \$1,800 SSD, housing costs of \$950, and \$500 in medical deduction who qualifies for FUA. After FSMIS applies all the deductions, the client qualifies for \$68 in SNAP benefits. Non categorically eligible client can get more than the minimum SNAP benefits – just like the cat el folks, so it's definitely worth their time to apply.

SNAP cases with aged or disabled individuals may meet income eligibility despite not being categorically eligible. FSMIS does not do a countable income test; instead, it applies all deductions coded and calculates benefits. These clients have to pass only the adjusted income test of 100% FPL, shown as N.F.S.I. (net food stamp income) on the FSMIS summary line. Large deductions, such as MED or high shelter costs, can make people eligible.

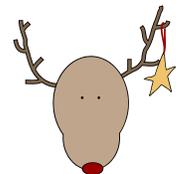
So what is the “real” income limit for SNAP? If the applicant has qualified deductions, there isn't one – really! This does make it a little bit harder to give a quick answer on the phone, but a few more moments spent explaining is so much better than incorrectly denying an eligible person or taking away their interest in applying.

Here's some language you could try:

Agency staff: Good morning, this is Mary, how can I help you?

Caller: How much money can I have and still get food stamps?

Agency staff: That depends on your complete monthly budget. If you are interested, how about if I send you an application today? After we get all of your budget information, we can work with you to see if you qualify. You could also go to any office and pick up an application if you don't want to wait for the mail.



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After the person completes the application, enter the information into FSMIS for the final eligibility decision. Be careful to use the correct *Cat El* code so the system calculates the income and deductions correctly.



If you have entered everything correctly, the decision which comes back will be the right one – every single time, guaranteed. Check to make sure *everything* is entered correctly; get rid of the old income lines and HH types which might confuse the new calculation.

When a client is truly not eligible, remember to act on the denial – don't just tell them they aren't eligible. All completed applications need to have an action taken on them; please don't hand the application back to the client. Denied cases should be entered onto FSMIS.

Remember, **ALWAYS** let FSMIS make the decision about income eligibility so you know it's right and the system denial is done!

Many thanks to the SNAP policy analysts and Diane Niko, quality control



Don't forget! The PCC code should no longer be used with clients in waived services as they no longer have Part D copays. The PCC code may be used with SSI clients in non-waived settings.

CMEU files

Operations at the Children's Medical Eligibility Unit (CMEU), branch 5517, are a little different than other branch offices. One difference is the office is only two people; another *huge* difference is that CMEU has zero paper – all client information is stored electronically.

What this means to offices who may be requested to send information to CMEU, is *paper files will not be accepted*. If a case is needed by CMEU, either Barbara Clark or Consuelo DeCamp will send the branch an email - or call if they get no response to the email - requesting the case be transferred, and if necessary, for materials be sent to them *electronically*. The local office should scan and attach only the requested documentation to an email – **please do not mail CMEU any hard copies**.

Although it can be tempting to send the hard file, the case is in 5517 after all, please resist the temptation. Any hard files received by CMEU will be sent back to the originating office; better to save the postage and keep the hard file in the original office.

Workers can talk with CEMU by phone or email. Cases are divided alphabetically; for clients with last names beginning with A – K, call or email [Barbara Clark](mailto:Barbara.Clark@va.gov) 503-378-5795; clients with last names beginning with L – Z, call or email [Consuelo DeCamp](mailto:Consuelo.DeCamp@va.gov) 503-378-5768. If the guardian or representative of a client child has a question about the child's medical, please direct the caller to the same phone numbers.



Looking for information on the DHS Modernization project? The newsletter archive is linked from the [Modernization web page](#), under the *Branch Tools* header. Or you can link to the newsletter directly here: http://www.dhs.state.or.us/modernization/newsletters_past.html



Fair housing: Religious protections

Religion is a protected class under the Federal fair housing law.

This means residents have the right to practice whatever their faith may be - or no faith at all - in their home as long as they don't damage the property or disturb their neighbors.

Residents also have the right to not be proselytized to by their housing providers.

For more information on these protected classes visit: www.FHCO.org/religion.htm. The Fair Housing Council is a nonprofit organization serving Oregon and South West Washington.

Anyone may call THE FREE Fair Housing Hotline at (800) 424-3247 extension 2, or visit www.FHCO.org.

Jo Becker, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Fair Housing Council

January 2012

Bath safety month

International quality of life month
National glaucoma awareness month

Jan. 1 -7 : Celebration of life week

Jan. 23 - 27: No name calling week

Jan. 1: New Years day

Jan. 2: **CLOSED**

Jan. 4: World Braille day

Jan. 7: Orthodox Christmas

Jan. 9: National clean off your desk day

Jan. 10: National cut your energy costs day

Jan. 13: Friday the 13th

Jan. 16: **Martin Luther King Jr day - CLOSED**

Jan. 23: Chinese New Year

Jan. 24: National compliment day

Jan. 24: Talk like a grizzled prospector day

Jan. 27: Holocaust memorial day

Jan. 28: National kazoo day

Jan. 29: Seeing eye dog day

Check out Canby!

Check out the Canby APD crew and their perfect PME re-review certificate!

We are all so proud of your hard work and accomplishments - and it looks like a fun group. Love your picture!



January 2012 training calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 CLOSED 	3	4	5	6
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <i>Dates and availability of classes are subject to change. Please review availability on the DHS Learning Center.</i> </div>				
9	10 Eligibility 101 (8:30 - 4:30) Oregon ACCESS basics (8:30 -4:30)	11 Eligibility 101 (8:30 - 4:30) Oregon ACCESS basics (8:30 -4:30)	12 Eligibility 101 (8:30 - 12:00)	13 Cultural competency and diversity (8:30 - 4:00)
16 CLOSED 	17	18 CBC: 512 (8:30 - 4:30) Netlink: Payroll reporting for new employees (1:00 - 4:00)	19 CBC: 512 (8:30 - 4:30)	20
23	24 Advanced eligibility calculations and trusts (8:30 - 4:30)	25 Employed persons with disabilities (8:30 - 4:30)	26 Presumptive Medicaid training (8:30 - 12:00) NVRA training Milwaukie (9:00 - 10:00) NVRA training Oregon City (1:30 - 2:30)	27
30 Cultural competency and diversity (8:30 - 4:00)	31			

State minimum wage change

The annual increase to Oregon's minimum wage rate is effective January 1, 2012. The new rate is \$8.80 per hour and affects all clients who earn less than \$8.80 currently.

The system cannot do an automatic update, so workers need to watch for the minimum wage earners and update their 2012 income when the client reapplies.

ERDC, TANF and OHP clients are not required to report the change until their recertification; SNAP clients in SRS do not need to report unless the change puts their income over the countable income limit. For all other program benefits, clients are required to report the change within 10 days.

Please see [SS-IM-11-045](#) for details and program contacts.



November 2011 SNAP honor roll

100% Accuracy!

0111 Baker City APD	100%	2011 Eugene LCOG	100%
0310 Canby APD	100%	2211 Albany ADS	100%
0511 St. Helens APD	100%	2518 West Portland ADS	100%
0913 LaPine APD	100%	2711 Dallas ADS	100%
1211 John Day APD	100%	2911 Tillamook ADS	100%
1311 Burns APD	100%	3013 Hermiston APD	100%
1611 Prineville APD	100%	3415 Tigard APD	100%
1612 Madras APD	100%	3515 Portland ADS	100%
1811 Klamath Falls APD	100%		

90% or Better Accuracy!

1717 Grants Pass DSO	96.00	2019 Cottage Grove AAA	93.33
2411 North Salem ADS	96.00	2111 Toledo ADS	93.33
2412 South Salem ADS	96.00	2311 Ontario APD	93.33
3417 Beaverton APD	96.00	3211 Florence AAA	93.33
3518 East Multnomah ADS	96.00	1513 Medford SSO	92.00
0311 Oregon City APD	93.33	1517 Medford DSO	92.00
0314 Estacada APD	93.33	2818 N/N East Portland ADS	92.00
0914 Redmond APD	93.33	3411 Hillsboro APD	92.00
1017 Roseburg DSO	93.33		

69% of all the APD/AAA offices are on the October honor roll!

Health care transformation update: Expanding patient-centered care

The past few issues I have talked about Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs). But there are other health reform efforts happening here which will benefit Oregonians. One such effort is to encourage the spread of patient-centered primary care across the state: <http://health.oregon.gov/OHA/OHPB/health-reform/primary-care-homes.shtml>.

Under a patient-centered model of care, patients would have a team of professionals coordinating the care they need. By coordinating the needs of patients through a single team of health professionals, more focus can be on prevention and delivering needed care, instead of breaking through the barriers that stand between patients and good health. Emphasizing prevention and early intervention is especially important for people who have serious chronic conditions which require multiple types of care from a variety of providers.



Earlier this month, Oregon's Patient-Centered Primary Care Home (PCPCH) Program launched. The program hopes to get practices across the state recognized as patient-centered "homes" so more and more communities begin focusing on prevention and improving health outcomes. Under patient-centered care, patients have personal, continuous relationships with their health team who are easily available.

In combination with other reform efforts, patient-centered care can help Oregon realize better health outcomes for all. The goal is to have 75 percent of all Oregonians receive their care in a recognized patient-centered primary care home by 2015.

Visit www.health.oregon.gov for more information on the program and how practices across Oregon can become recognized for delivering quality patient-centered primary care. For the most up-to-date information on CCOs, visit <http://health.oregon.gov/OHA/OHPB/health-reform/ccos.shtml>.

I will continue to provide monthly updates in *In the Loop*. If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me.

Tina Kitchin, DHS Medical Director



Don't forget! This time of year, a lot of pay stubs include the pay type *holiday pay*. Many working clients, just like the state, are given holidays off with pay and the paid holiday is designated as *holiday pay* – this income is countable and should be included in the income calculation.



CAPI tip of the month

Form [DHS 3400](#), *Information and Referral for Low-income Households* has been added to the Online Application. When a client applies for benefits they will already have received the form electronically and will have the ability to print the form in the Online Print Summary.

Sending applications at recertification

Need guidance on what to send on the application for a client at recert? [Worker Guide B.8](#) has a great explanation.

If the client is a Medicaid only client, including the long-term care service cases, a new application is *not needed* for a redetermination of eligibility. As long as the client's benefits have not closed yet, workers can use the application already signed and on file to redetermine eligibility. A new application can be requested, but there are very few reasons why waiting for a new application would be necessary or preferable to using what is already on file.

For non OHP cases, contact the client by phone to review their eligibility. Update Oregon ACCESS with the new information and request verification *only* if necessary; the Worker Guide has complete and easy to follow instructions. If the client is on OHP only *do not wait for or request an interview* because no interview is allowed for OHP; use what is available on the screens and send a pending notice if necessary.

Clients with both SNAP and Medicaid benefits have two options (also in the Worker Guide):

1. Interview the client over the telephone and review and update all sections of Oregon ACCESS. Send an application to the client with only the updated information (be sure to double check) for their signature and a pending notice for any verification needed.
2. Send a *blank* application to the client if you cannot reach them by phone and include an interview appointment. Be sure to print the recert version of the 539A from Oregon ACCESS to get a blank version, and not the 539A in the packet – the packet version has last year's information and should not be used.



Hopefully this helps clear up some of the confusion. Please be sure to use only one of these options so there is consistency all across the state.

SNAP medical deductions verification

The SNAP policy analysts decided workers who see clients in their home can narrate verification of eligible medical deductions and do not have to keep copy of the bill in the file.

This means the narration needs to be specific and clear. If the bill is not on file, the narration has to include the name of the entity owed the money and how much the monthly payment is for ongoing months. Narration should also state the bill was viewed – it sounds like it would be obvious, but the narration should indicate the worker saw the actual bill and it not just take the client's word they had one.

The additional narration should prevent errors and reduce mail costs as well as, hopefully, saving time in the office. For more information on medical deductions in the SNAP program, see the SNAP manual, [chapter F.19](#). Thanks SNAP!

HIPP transition and January changes

Phase 1 of the transition of the Health Insurance Premium Payment (HIPP) program to HIG was successfully completed on November 1. HIG's Premium Reimbursement Coordinators conducted recertifications for each existing HIPP case and those which were determined eligible received November and December payments. All clients determined not eligible received benefit reduction letters.

Now, we are on to Phase 2. On January 1, 2012, a new set of guidelines for the HIPP and PHI programs will go into effect. This includes many exciting changes which will allow more people to qualify. A few of the changes are:



- Increases to the premium standards on the Medical Savings Chart and a new way to calculate cost effectiveness;
- Policyholders no longer have to live in the same household as the Medicaid recipient;
- A new Special Conditions Chart will allow HIG to consider higher premium amounts for people who have certain medical conditions;
- The definition of major medical has been clarified and the \$10,000 limitation removed;
- HIPP and PHI determinations will no longer be hearable;
- Clients with Medicare Part A and Part B will not qualify for HIPP and PHI;
- The 3073 form used to make PHI referrals will become obsolete at the end of December.

OAR 461-135-1100, 461-135-0990, 461-155-0360 and 410-120-1960 have all been revised and become effective on January 1, 2012. Look for updates to the [SPD worker guide](#), [Family Services Manual](#) and [DMAP worker guide](#) after January 1, 2012 for full program eligibility details. Please make HIPP and PHI referrals on the newly revised [MSC415H](#). A transmittal will be sent out the last week of December with additional details.

Questions? Please contact one of the premium reimbursement coordinators: Janine Kelty 503 378-3324 or Lori Babcock 503 378-3226, or the TPL Analyst for OPAR, Carolyn Thiebes 503 378-3507.



Don't forget! Please be careful with utility allowances on the SNAP cases. APD and AAA account for most of the utility errors found by statewide

Quality Control. Some of the most common errors are allowing a deduction for utilities included in the rent and not updating the screen when there is a change. Pre-filled narrations can be problematic so avoid generic statements which could apply to anyone and don't explain the client's specific situation. See [SNAP F. 22](#) for more information.

Overpayment procedure guide updated

The Overpayment Procedure Guide on SPD Staff Tools has been updated in the areas of CEP and CBC programs.

The complete manual can be found at the following link: <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/spd/tools/cm/provovp/guide.htm>

Kristen D Hutton, Payment Support Unit

Modernization program update

Hello and happy holidays! Here in modernization land, December has been a busy month. We would like to start by welcoming Melissa Lantz as the new Business Transition Coordinator for APD. If you have any questions, ideas or concerns please feel free to email Melissa at Melissa.a.Lantz@state.or.us.

The Modernization team has been re-designing the Modernization web site as part of the changes occurring in December. We are pleased to announce the web site is live and ready for your viewing. To go to the new Modernization web site please type <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/modernization> into your internet browser.

The web site can provide field staff a plethora of information, including but not limited to:

- Updates for three of Modernization's projects;
- Training tools for staff including the online application and CAPI sandbox;
- CAPI computer based trainings (CBT);
- A link to submit a question or comment to Modernization;
- A link to the SPD staff tools.



Don't forget to bookmark the web site to your favorites list for easy access!

Melissa Lantz, APD Business Transition Coordinator

INVITATION

Stakeholder Committee



Help us shape the future of the
STEPS to Success with HCW's program.

Case manager input is vital to our goal of being more responsive to consumer-employer needs. .

The Stakeholder Committee meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 1PM, with phone conference option

To RSVP or for more information:

Suzanne.L.Huffman@state.or.us

503-373-1078

Welcome back Naomi!

Naomi Sacks is returning to APD and will provide lead work for Providence Elder Place which is a large PACE program in Portland. PACE (Program for All Inclusive Care for the Elderly) is a fully integrated service model which provides all Medicaid and Medicare services through a single service provider. This program was previously managed in Licensing and Quality section but will now be a Field Services responsibility.

Naomi will be also assisting management and the APD Health Systems Transformation Team identify new service models similar to PACE which might be useful for Coordinated Care Organizations serving our clients in the future. Naomi has great skill sets for this work and we are very grateful for her expertise and leadership. Naomi can be reached at 503-945-6396.

Happy Holidays from Canby APD!



Top row: Elf Kelly von Barga (HSS3); Elf Cora Belsler (Case Manager); Santa Claus, JR Oleyar (PEM B); Elf Amber Villanueva (HSS3); Elf Kacey Dodson (OS2)

Bottom row: Elf Stephanie Cammack (HSA2); Elf Diana Granados (Case Manager); Elf Ronda Rice (Case Manager); Elf Stephanie Cruz (HSS3); Elf Melissa Hendricks (Case Manager); Elf Michelle Kelly (OS2)

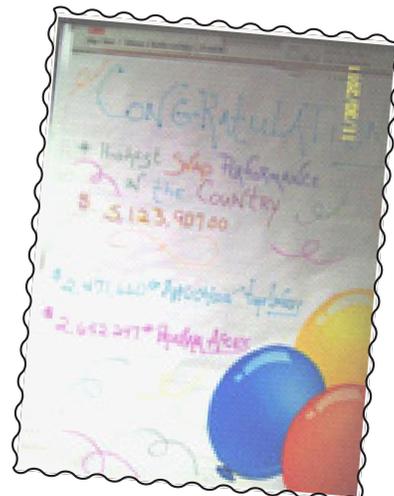
SNAP bonus award celebration

On November 30th at 3:00 p.m. many offices around the state took time to celebrate the award of over \$5 million in SNAP bonus money to Oregon.

The Federal government once again recognized the excellent work of the DHS and AAA staff and there are literally thousands of households who can now have regular meals because of your amazing efforts.

Thank you to everyone – you do incredible work with a real and important impact on the people of Oregon.

We know a lot of areas celebrated your accomplishments and we would love to see your picture! Here are a few from the celebration in Baker City with both the APD and SSP offices.



Want to see your area featured in *In the Loop*? Its easy! Gather your photos and story then contact Karen Gulliver with SPD Field Services (karen.l.gulliver@state.or.us) and your area can be famous too!



Looking for past issues of *In the Loop*? Wish there was an index of articles? Find both on the SPD Field Services web page: <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/spd/tools/field/index.htm>