



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Aging and Adult Services**

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Dennis W. Streets, Director
919-733-3983

July 14, 2010

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: Special Assistance Supervisors and Caseworkers

SUBJECT: Consolidation of the Special Assistance for the Blind Program with the State/County Special Assistance for Adults Program

A change is taking place within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that impacts the State/County Special Assistance for Adults Program. The Special Assistance for the Blind Program (SAB) is being consolidated with the State/County Special Assistance for Adults (SA) Program. The SAB Program, currently administered by the Division of Services for the Blind, will now be administered by the Division of Aging and Adult Services, Adult Services Section, which oversees the SA Program. This change was enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly in Session Law 2010-31 (Senate Bill 897), which was ratified on June 30, 2010. The consolidation of the two programs supports the [DHHS Excels](#) initiative and its goal for government to run efficiently and effectively by eliminating duplication and streamlining access to services.

The current SAB caseload of sixty-nine individuals (adults and children) will be merged with the SA caseload. Thirty-one counties have at least one SAB case. The consolidation of the two programs will be implemented September 1, 2010. The majority of counties are not affected by the consolidation, but we want you to be aware of the change.

The SAB Program operates in much the same way as does the SA for Adults Program. SAB recipients, whose income and resources are not sufficient to meet their expenses in licensed facilities, receive a monthly payment just as SA recipients do. As is the case with SA, SAB payments are shared equally by the county of residence and the state. Counties' budgets should not be impacted by the consolidation. Revised funding authorizations will be provided to the affected counties based on the consolidation of these programs.

Effective September 1, 2010, the DSSs will determine initial SA eligibility for individuals (adults and children) who are blind according to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) regulations, and who meet other SA eligibility criteria. Prior to the consolidation, DSSs determined SA eligibility for individuals who are aged or disabled according to SSI regulations.

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The consolidation establishes blindness, along with age and disability, as one of the basic eligibility requirements for SA. While the consolidation only affects thirty-one DSSs at this time, additional counties may have cases as new individuals who are blind apply for SA.

The thirty-one DSSs will also complete the necessary redeterminations of eligibility for current SAB recipients (within twelve months after the consolidation). These DSSs are already doing some maintenance of current SAB cases for Medicaid eligibility.

SAB cases are not currently in the Eligibility Information System (EIS). Changes are needed in EIS in order for the SAB cases to be entered into that system. The changes to EIS should be completed by September 1, 2010. The affected county departments of social services (DSS) will receive the SAB cases (paper files) during the month of August. Beginning in September, the DSSs will enter the SAB cases into EIS so that payments can be made via EIS information beginning with the October check.

County DSSs will receive an Administrative Letter in August outlining more specific details about implementing the consolidation of the SAB Program with the SA Program. The Administrative Letter will address the eligibility requirements that will be added to SA policy for individuals who are blind. Correspondence about the consolidation will be sent to SAB recipients and their authorized representatives and to the administrators of the facilities where these recipients reside. The letters will provide details about the consolidation of the programs, including specific DSS contact information. We will send you copies of this correspondence.

The Adult Programs Representatives are working with the thirty-one DSSs with active SAB cases and will continue to do so to assure a smooth transition for SAB recipients and county DSS staff. If you have questions about these changes, please contact your [Adult Programs Representatives](#) or Chris Urso or Suzanne Merrill in the central office at 919-733-3818.

Sincerely,



Dennis W. Streets

DWS:cu/sm

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