



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for
Human Services

Date: October 6, 2020

Dear County Directors of Social Services:

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

Subject: Suspended H and I Controlled Substance Felons Assessments during COVID-19 Pandemic (effective through November 30, 2020) and Extend Sanction Dates

Priority: Information and Action Needed

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 state of emergency and continued requirement for social distancing has disrupted how services are delivered by the county departments of social services, including the ability of Qualified Professionals in Substance Abuse (QPSA) to perform assessments for those Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applicants that have H or I controlled substance felony offenses in North Carolina.

Counties are required to continue to suspend the substance abuse assessments for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applicants and recipients that have H or I controlled substance felony offenses in North Carolina by entering a future sanction date in NC FAST when processing applications, recertifications and changes. Extend the sanction start date for cases that do not extend past the current suspension month for assessments, November 2020.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

Applicant and recertified households that contain an individual with a H or I controlled substance felony are required to successfully complete and/or participate in an approved substance abuse program. This requirement is being temporarily suspended until their next recertification. The individuals must still meet their minimum 6-month minimum disqualification period per FNS 290.02 A. 1.

1. The worker must explain to the FNS unit that the requirement to successfully complete an assessment with the local area mental health has not been waived. The requirement is being suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will be required at their next recertification.
2. The worker must take the following actions to enter evidence and document the suspension of the requirement in NC FAST:

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES • ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES

LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603
MAILING ADDRESS: 2420 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2420
www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6300 • FAX: 919-334-1265

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- a. Enter a sanction in NC FAST using the last day of the month following the last month of the certification period as the start date. Do not enter an end date.
- b. Document in the NC FAST notes that the initial assessment was waived due to COVID-19 pandemic and the individual must comply at the next recertification. Apply normal policy as outlined in FNS 290 at the next recertification.

Example:

- Date of application: 4/24/2020.
 - Date of conviction: 1/2/2018.
 - Certification period assigned: April 2020 to September 2020.
 - The worker will enter a sanction in NC FAST using start date of 10/1/2020 and no end date.
3. **Reminder:** refer to the report in FAST Help to extend the sanction start dates for the cases that were not extended past the current suspension month (November 2020) for assessments. The sanction start date must be changed in NC FAST by extending the sanction start date to the last day of the month after their new certification period ends to prevent premature closures and allow applicants and recipients time to comply once the suspension is lifted.
- a. Refer to the report posted in [FAST Help](#) > **Economic Services>Reports>FNS>Drug Assessments>200930 Drug Assessments**. Use the NC FAST report password to retrieve the report.
 - b. A report is posted in FAST Help October 1, 2020 which contain cases with a sanction start date for the month November 2020.
 - c. If the suspension of substance abuse assessments extends through December, an additional report will be posted in FAST Help November 2, 2020 which will contain cases with a sanction start date for the month December 2020.
 - d. Once the sanction start dates are changed NC FAST will generate a notice. Caseworkers must ensure the correct notice is generated.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

This policy is effective upon receipt for recertifications, any pending applications and all new applications taken up to and including November 30, 2020. Submit any questions regarding this policy to Operational Support Team (OST) at DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services Section

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