



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

YVONNE COPELAND • Director, Division of Child and Family Well
Being

Date: March 31, 2022

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

Priority: Information and Action Required

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.

The State has exercised the option granted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to continue action during the COVID-19 Pandemic Public Health Emergency (PHE) to suspend substance abuse assessments (for FNS applicants and recipients that have H or I controlled substance felony offenses in North Carolina) until the PHE is lifted. Once lifted, we anticipate this waiver will end after the end of the month following the month in which the PHE ends.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

Per normal policy, households that include an individual with a H or I controlled substance felony are required to successfully complete and/or participate in an approved substance abuse treatment program. This requirement has been temporarily suspended until their next recertification that would be due after the end of the month following the month in which the PHE is lifted. The individuals must still meet their minimum 6-month minimum disqualification period per [FNS 270 Controlled Substance Felons](#).

1. The worker must explain to the FNS unit that the requirement to successfully complete an assessment with the QPSA has been temporarily suspended. The requirement is being suspended due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and will be required at their next recertification due after the end of the month following the month in which the PHE is lifted.
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 first day of the month following the end 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 270 Controlled Substance Felons](#) at the next recertification.

Example:

- If the certification period ends 1/31, the start date should be 2/1.
 - Date of application: 4/24/2020.
 - Date of conviction: 1/2/2018.
 - Certification period assigned: April 2020 to September 2020.
3. **Reminder:** Refer to the report in FAST Help that is posted monthly to extend the sanction start dates for the cases that were not extended past the current suspension month. The sanction start date must be changed in NC FAST by extending the sanction start date the first day of the month following the end of the certification period as the start date 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>2022](#). Use the NC FAST report password to retrieve the report.
 - b. The report is posted in FAST Help monthly which contain cases with a sanction start date for each month.
 - c. 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 for recertifications, any pending applications, and all new applications taken through the last day of the month following the month in which the PHE is lifted. If you have any questions, please submit them to the Continuous Quality Improvement Team (CQI) dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Madhu Vulimiri, MPP
Deputy Director
Division of Child and Family Well-Being



Carla West
Senior Director for Economic Security
Division of Social Services, Economic and Family Services Section

MV/CLW/vd

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