



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: September 27, 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 (**the suspension will be in effect through at least October 31st**) and Extend Sanction Dates

Priority: Information and Action Required

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The COVID-19 Pandemic Public Health Emergency (PHE) has not been lifted therefore temporarily suspension of substance abuse assessments will continue **through October 31, 2022**. In North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applicants and recipients that have H or I controlled substance felony offenses are required to complete an assessment in order to meet the eligibility requirements for FNS. This requirement has been temporarily suspended until the next recertification that would be due after the end of the month following the month in which the PHE is lifted.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

1. The worker must explain to the FNS unit that the requirement per [FNS 270 Controlled Substance Felons](#) 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. **To prevent cases from closing or recipients being removed from cases prematurely, the worker **MUST** take the following actions to enter evidence and document the suspension of the requirement in NC FAST:**
 - 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:

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL BEING

LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603
MAILING ADDRESS: 2416 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2420
www.ncdhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6300 • FAX: 919-334-1265

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- If the certification period ends 1/31, the start date should be 2/1.
 - Date of application: 4/24/2022.
 - Date of conviction: 1/2/2018.
 - Certification period assigned: April 2022 to September 2022.
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.

Note: If the FNS case was closed prematurely the case **MUST** be reviewed for reopening and determine if an under issuance occurred. If an under issuance occurred benefits can be restored up to 12 months prior to the date the under issuance is discovered whichever of the following occurred first.

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

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