TO:    DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
       DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
       FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS

FROM:  KEVIN MAHON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA

RE:    AVAILABILITY OF DENTAL SERVICES FOR TCA CUSTOMERS
       PARTICIPATING IN WORK ACTIVITIES

PROGRAMS
AFFECTED: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE (TCA)

ORIGINATING
OFFICE:  OFFICE OF POLICY AND RESEARCH

BACKGROUND:

For the last six years, The University of Maryland (UM) Dental School provided
care to AFDC recipients who were participants of Maryland's previous welfare-to-work
program, Project Independence (PI). This program was quite effective in improving the
facial appearance and self-esteem of selected PI participants, thereby improving their
employability. During that time more than 700 recipients were treated. Care was
provided by dental students at the school and the program was very cost effective. This
extremely important resource is still available at UM Dental School.

It is well documented that the need for dental care in the TCA population is still
very high and that poor dental appearance affects employability. Since the focus of
welfare reform is work, not training, and all applicants for TCA must seek employment
immediately upon application for cash assistance, the need to address esthetic dental
issues is even greater. Although the PI program is no longer in existence (it is now
referred to as "Work Opportunities") the University of Maryland received a funding
increase to continue to provide dental services to the TCA population. The UM Dental
School can now accommodate up to 25 new referrals weekly.
**ACTION REQUIRED:**

Local programs need to reestablish a referral network for appropriate TCA customers to access this service. It should be kept in mind that under HealthChoice some Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) provide dental care and are paid a capitation fee for services. Customers who are selected for the UM Dental School should be those needing extensive dental work or cosmetic work beyond those services that are provided at the MCO.

Local departments should develop participation selection criteria for dental referrals that include current enrollment and active participation in a work activity. Selected customers should be apprised of the requirements of the UM Dental School:

- Failure to attend two scheduled appointments without notice at the UM Dental School results in a customer being discontinued from the program.

- Participants must pay an initial $10 to enter the program. This fee may be paid from work activities funding.

- Transportation for initial and follow up visits must be arranged by the customer or DSS designated program coordinator.

- Designate LDSS staff to forward referrals to the Dental School. This person may arrange the customer’s initial visit to the Dental School by calling or faxing:

  **Miriam Dyson**
  
  Dental Practice System
  666 West Baltimore Street
  Baltimore, Maryland 21201-1586
  (410) 706-2400
  FAX (410) 706-3028

**ACTION REQUIRED OF:** All Local Departments of Social Services

**ACTION DUE DATE:** Upon Receipt

**INQUIRIES:** May be directed to Phyliss J. Arrington, Office of Policy and Research at (410) 767-7079 or Rita Lewis, Office of Work Opportunities at (410) 767-7432. The UM Dental School may also be contacted directly at the number above for brochures and further details concerning the benefits and services provided by the program.

Cc: FIA Management Staff
    Constituent Services
    DHR Executive Staff
    UM Dental School