



Department of Human Resources  
311 West Saratoga Street  
Baltimore MD 21201

## FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

Control Number: 08-21

Effective Date: January 1, 2008

Issuance Date: December 27, 2007

**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT  
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISOR AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF  
HEALTH OFFICERS, LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS  
LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS, ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

**FROM: KEVIN M. MCGUIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA  
CHERYL A. CAMILLO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DHMH/OES**

**RE: SOCIAL SECURITY (RSDI) AND SSI COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE  
AND RELATED INCREASES**

**PROGRAMS AFFECTED: MEDICAL ASSISTANCE**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS**

**Summary:**

Historically, Social Security Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit payments have increased each year. This is usually true for Railroad Retirement and Veterans Benefits also. The mass change process to take these changes into account for Medical Assistance purposes is described in this transmittal. Action transmittal 08-20 covers the effect of the Social Security cost-of-living adjustment on cash assistance and food stamps.

**Action Required:**

Effective January 2008, Social Security (RSDI) and SSI benefits will increase by 2.3% and Railroad Retirement and Veterans Benefits will be adjusted by the same percentage. Local Departments need to take these changes into account in all affected programs according to the procedures outlined on the following pages.

**NOTE: Count the increase for all cases beginning with January 2008 benefits. A mass change took place on December 8, 2007 to update the RSDI, SSI, Railroad Retirement and Veterans Benefits for ongoing cases effective January 1, 2008.**

**I. SSI and RSDI Benefits Effective January 2008**

Federal Living Arrangements*	Amount of SSI Increase	SSI Only		SSI and RSDI	
		Present Benefit 1	New Benefit 2	Present Benefit 3	New Benefit 4**
Individual A or C	14.00	623.00	637.00	643.00	657.00
Couple A	22.00	934.00	956.00	954.00	976.00
Individual B	9.33	415.34	424.67	435.34	444.67
Couple B	14.67	622.67	637.34	642.67	657.34
Individual with essential person A***	21.00	935.00	956.00	955.00	976.00
Couple with essential person A	29.00	1246.00	1275.00	1266.00	1295.00
Individual with essential person B	14.00	623.34	637.34	643.34	657.34
Couple with essential person B	19.33	830.67	850.00	850.67	870.00

\*A - Independent living arrangement; B - One-third reduction for living in the household of another and receiving support and maintenance from the householder; C - Child living with parents or stepparents whose resources and income are considered in determining the countable income and resources of the child.

\*\* - The benefit in Column 4 is usually \$20 more than the benefit in Column 2. The same relationship exists between Columns 3 and 1.

\*\*\* - Essential Person Increments:

Living Arrangements	Amount of SSI Increase	Present Benefit	New Benefit
A	\$7.00	\$312.00	\$319.00
B	\$4.66	\$208.00	\$212.66

## **II. Increase in Railroad Retirement Benefits**

Railroad Retirement (RR) benefits was also adjusted in the mass modification for January 2008.

## **III. Increase in Veterans Benefits**

The cost-of-living increase in the VA pension program will also be 2.3% effective January 2008. Veterans Benefits was also be adjusted in the mass modification for January 2008.

## **IV. Long Term Care Medical Assistance Cases**

The mass change adjusted the available income and sent a notice to the customer and facility.

## **V. Community Medical Assistance Cases**

Adjustments in these cases were done by the mass change. The changes will be effective in all active cases, including those preserved for Spenddown.

## **VI. Coverage for Certain Former SSI Recipients under the Pickle Amendment**

The annual review for potential Pickle eligible persons is to be conducted as noted in Action Transmittal #00-12.

## **VII. CARES**

On December 8, 2007, the Social Security and SSI cost-of-living income adjustments (COLA) will be made to CARES Assistance Units (AUs) in active or spend-down status. This process, referred to as Mass Modification, causes all assistance units to be put through batch eligibility. Batch eligibility examines each AU for all eligibility factors and determines program type, AU status and benefit level. Case managers will receive an alert (#224 Grant Changed in Batch) for any AU with a change in status or benefit level. Also produced, if applicable, are adverse action notices.

CARES will also update the SSA and SSI income fields on cases that are in an active no pay status, providing such income is present on the UINC (unearned income) screen. However, eligibility will not be calculated or notices produced until the case is reactivated. Cases in a pend status with SSI or SSA income should be reviewed so that the income is correctly reflected for January.

### **Inquiries:**

For policy questions, contact the DHMH Division of Eligibility Policy and MCHP at 410-767-1463 or 1-800-492-5231 (select option 2 and request extension 1463). Contact Debbie Simon at 410-238-1363 for CARES questions.

cc: DHR Executive Staff  
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