

TO: Local District Commissioners, Medicaid Directors, Third Party Supervisors

FROM: Betty Rice, Director
Office of Medicaid Management

SUBJECT: Elimination of the Resource Test for Qualified Individuals (QIs) and Changes to the SLIMB Program

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 1, 2002

CONTACT PERSON: Local District Support Unit: Upstate - 518-474-8216
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As a result of recent legislation, the resource test for the Qualified Individual categories (QI-1 and QI-2) will be eliminated, effective May 1, 2002. Previously, the resource test for eligibility for the QI programs was set at twice the SSI resource level, or \$4,000 for single individuals and \$6,000 for couples. Effective May 1, 2002, this resource test will no longer be in effect for those individuals who qualify based on income, for the Qualified Individual categories. To qualify for the QI-1 program income must be at least 120% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but less than 135% of the FPL. To qualify for the QI-2 program, income must be at least 135% of the FPL, but less than 175% of the FPL. For applications that include a period of coverage prior to May 1, 2002, the resource test would apply to that period of coverage.

An exception to the income guidelines for the QI-1 program as stated above, would be in a situation where the applicant is determined to be eligible for the SLIMB program based on income, but has resources in excess of the SLIMB resource level. Effective May 1, 2002, such individual will be eligible for the QI-1 program. Please keep in mind that individuals must first be determined ineligible for the SLIMB program based on resources alone. All other eligibility criteria (e.g., entitled to Medicare Part A) must be met.

The resource test must still be met by SLIMBs (individuals with income between 100% - 120% of the FPL and resources set at twice the SSI resource level). However, in order to streamline the application process, effective May 1, 2002, districts will no longer be required to verify resources of SLIMBs. A self-attestation of resources from the applicant will be accepted. Self attestation will be accomplished by the applicant completing the resource section of the Medicare Premium Payment Program Application and signing the back of the application.

The Medicare Premium Payment Program application may only be used when applying for SLIMB, QI-1 and QI-2 programs. If an individual wants to spenddown in order to qualify for Medicaid or is applying for the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program (QMB), he/she must complete the common application, LDSS - 2921, and must document resources.

MBL will be enhanced to accommodate these changes on upstate production effective March 25, 2002, for budgets dated May 1, 2002 or later.

Please also be aware that beginning in April, 2002, and continuing for the next twelve months, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will be sending mailings to some individuals who might be eligible to have Medicaid pay the Medicare Part B premium. This activity may generate an increased number of inquiries about these programs. Therefore, you are encouraged to coordinate your activities with local community agencies. For example, you may choose to delegate the face-to-face interview to the Local Office for the Aging or other such agency. Such agencies should be alerted to the changes to the SLIMB, QI-1 and QI-2 programs that are outlined in this GIS message. They should also be reminded that the simplified application form may only be used for determining eligibility for the SLIMB or QI programs.

May is Senior Citizen Month. This would be a good time to coordinate activities with local agencies with an aim toward increasing enrollment in the Medicare Savings Programs. The State Office for the Aging will also be contacting their local offices to encourage cooperation with local social services offices and as a result Medicaid Directors may be receiving calls from these offices.