DMA ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO: 07-12, LIFELINE/LINK-UP

DATE: August 30, 2012

SUBJECT: Lifeline/Link-Up

DISTRIBUTION: County Directors of Social Services
Medicaid Supervisors
Medicaid Eligibility Staff

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this letter is to provide information and instructions regarding changes to the Lifeline/Link-Up Assistance Programs.

The Lifeline Assistance Program is designed to promote universal service by helping low-income individuals afford telephone service. Lifeline Assistance allows those eligible low-income customers to receive a credit on their monthly telephone bill. The Link-Up Program provides low-income persons a discount toward the cost of establishing local telephone service.

In an effort to reform and modernize the Lifeline Program, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has approved a comprehensive overhaul of the Lifeline/Link-Up program which was effective April 1, 2012.

II. PROCEDURES

Lifeline provides a discount of up to $12.75 per month off the cost of local telephone service. A maximum of one discount per household is permitted, which is defined as an individual or group of individuals living at the same address as an economic unit. An economic unit consists of all adult individuals contributing to and sharing in the income and expenses of a household. The amount of the discount was $13.50 prior to August 1, 2012. Households interested in this service must apply directly with the telephone company.

The Link-up Program was discontinued effective April 1, 2012 with the exception of Native Americans who reside on federally recognized tribal lands. These households may qualify for a Lifeline discount of up to $34.25 per month and a Link-Up discount of up to $100 off the cost of connecting local telephone service. In addition, Native Americans are also eligible for Lifeline and Link-Up if they receive Bureau of Indian Affairs general assistance, Tribally Administered Temporary Assistance for the Needy Families, Head Start (based on the income standard), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. Households requesting new telephone service must apply for Lifeline/Link-Up directly with the telephone company.

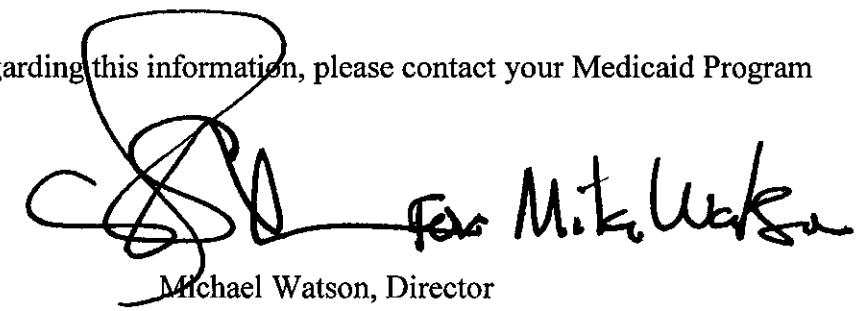
III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTION

Apply these new procedures to applications, certifications, reviews, or request from households upon the receipt of this letter. Discontinue use of the DSS-8168, North Carolina Lifeline/Link-Up Self Certification Letter, and all Lifeline/Link-Up posters and brochures. The county DSS is not responsible for providing a form to the applicant/recipient; households interested in this service must contact their provider directly to apply for Lifeline services. At this time no new brochures or posters will be made available.

IV. EFFECTIVE

Upon Receipt

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact your Medicaid Program Representative.



Michael Watson, Director

(This information was researched and written by Pam Cooper, Policy Consultant, Medicaid Eligibility Unit).