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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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DSS-4037EL (Rev. 9/89)

Transmittal No: 93 LCM-1

Date: January 4, 1993

Division: Health and Long Term
Care

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Medical Assistance Program Use of Eyeglass Materials Produced
by the State Department of Correctional Services

ATTACHMENTS: None

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has begun work with the Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) on a project to provide eyeglass materials to Medicaid recipients.

At the present time DOCS has an optical lab at its Wallkill facility located in Ulster County in which inmates receive training and produce eyeglasses for the correctional system and the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. Through participation in this optical lab training program, inmates acquire skills and work habits they need to obtain gainful employment upon release. The cost-effective provision by DOCS of eyeglass materials for Medicaid recipients will allow the optical training program at Wallkill to provide training to additional inmates.

Under this project, eyeglass dispensers (i.e. optometrists, opticians, and retail optical establishments) will send the eyeglass prescriptions for Medicaid recipients to DSS for forwarding to DOCS. The eyeglasses will be produced by DOCS and returned directly to the dispensing eye care providers. Eye care providers will continue to bill the Medicaid Management Information System directly for the examination and dispensing fee.

Regulations supporting this project and a Cooperative Agreement between this Department and DOCS which sets forth standards for service quality and timeliness are being developed.

This project will be phased in with a target date of April 1, 1993 for Phase I. The target date for completion of all phases is June 30, 1994, including all counties except New York City. Any eyeglass dispenser serving recipients from a designated social services district will be required to order eyeglass materials for such recipients from DOCS after the effective date for the phase which includes that social services district. The Department will notify providers of this new program in February of 1993.

Phase I will include the counties of: Broome, Delaware, Orange, Sullivan, Tioga and Ulster based on the proximity to Walkill and DOCS' anticipated production capacity. As the production capacity of Wallkill increases, recipients from other districts will be added to this project. The tentative sequence for further implementation is:

Phase II counties: Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester.

Phase III counties: Albany, Cayuga, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, Rensselaer, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Tompkins, Warren, Washington.

Phase IV counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Nassau, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Suffolk, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates.

It will be important to gain the cooperation of prescribers and dispensers in the community since they remain the vital link to the recipients. Under Chapter 41 of the Laws of 1992, DSS has been authorized to enhance fees for eye care services. DSS is working with the Department of Health (DOH) to develop a proposal to enhance eye care fees paid to dispensers to improve access to eyeglass services. The fee proposal focuses on examination, dispensing, repair and refitting fees. It does not include lens and frame fees. This proposal is being prepared for submission to the Division of Budget.

The DOCS is also developing the capacity to provide standard wheelchairs. Medicaid will be required to use DOCS' produced wheelchairs once available. The target date for this is August 1, 1993. Since wheelchair volume is significantly lower than that for eyeglasses, statewide implementation is anticipated.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Ms. Joyce Usher, Division of Health and Long Term Care at 1-800-342-3715, extension 3-5889, User ID 89A143.

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Executive Deputy Commissioner