

DATE: November 6, 2017

TO: Subscribers

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Commissioners, SNAP Directors, TA Directors, MA Directors and Fraud Directors

FROM: Kevin Kehmna, Director, Audit & Quality Improvement

SUBJECT: Excessive Replacement Card Notices to Clients

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 6, 2017

CONTACT PERSON: Stephen Bach, Director of Program Integrity, (518) 402-0117

The purpose of this GIS is to inform social services districts (districts) of a new Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) client notice designed to reduce unnecessary benefit card production costs and enhance program integrity. This notice will be generated each time the app/payee in a case exceeds four (4) or more replacement permanent Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card requests in a 12-month period. A message will be displayed on screen WIDLIM whenever the threshold for a replacement card is reached, indicating the number of permanent cards the client has requested in the previous 12 months. Requests for permanent card replacements will be counted towards the threshold for only clients who are app/payees in either a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) only case, or in a Temporary Assistance (TA) case receiving SNAP benefits. Replacement card requests by clients in MA-Only cases with no separate SNAP involvement will not be counted. Requests for replacement Temporary Vault and Authorized Representative cards will also not be included in the count. Please note that upon receiving the letter, some clients may contact their local district office for further information.

The fact that a client is being sent a letter does not mean they have engaged in any unlawful activity. Many clients who repeatedly request cards are either in need of more information on the Common Benefit Identification Card (CBIC) or are in need of other services. In such cases, workers will have the ability to suppress the generation of this notice on screen WIDLIM by indicating that the client is exempt.

For your information, these letters contain the following text in English and Spanish:

Dear SNAP recipient:

As a recipient of benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), you were issued a Common Benefit Identification Card (CBIC). Your CBIC, also called an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, is used to access your SNAP benefits as well as certain other assistance benefits.

Our records show that you have ordered **four or more** replacement EBT cards within the last twelve months. Your EBT card is designed to last for years. You can use the same EBT card every time you use your benefits for as long as you receive benefits.

Please remember, the State considers the misuse of EBT cards and SNAP benefits a program violation that may be subject to various penalties and sanctions. If you continue to request replacement EBT cards, your case will be referred to your Social Services District's Program Integrity unit for possible investigation in order to ensure that no fraudulent activities have occurred. While the State recognizes that there are legitimate reasons for requesting replacement cards, the State is also required to protect the integrity of SNAP and review such matters.

If you have questions regarding your EBT card, please visit our website at www.otda.ny.gov/programs/ebt/ or call 1-800-342-3009. You can also view the EBT informational brochure at <http://otda.ny.gov/programs/publications/5004.pdf>.

Thank you for your cooperation.