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## General Information System (GIS) Message

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### Section 1

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<b>To:</b>	Subscribers
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Commissioners, TA Directors, SNAP Directors, HEAP Coordinators, Staff Development Coordinators
<b>From:</b>	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
<b>Subject:</b>	Treatment of Health Care Worker Bonus Payments for Temporary Assistance (TA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
<b>Effective Date:</b>	April 9, 2022
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### Section 2

The purpose of this General Information Systems (GIS) Message is to advise Social Services Districts (districts) of amendments to Social Services Law (SSL) § 131-a and SSL § 367 made as a result of the recently enacted 2022-2023 State Fiscal Year Budget. Section SSL § 367-w: "Health Care and Mental Hygiene Worker Bonuses" was added to introduce the potential for new Health Care Worker Bonus payments which would be provided as early as State Fiscal Year 2023. This new section directs the Commissioner of Health to seek federal approval and federal/state funding to provide certain frontline health care and mental hygiene workers with bonuses of up to \$3,000 to encourage the recruitment and retention of these workers during a time of staff shortages and turnover in the health care field. Additionally, the enacted budget adds section 131-a(8)(a)(x), which requires that these bonuses be exempted for public assistance purposes.

#### Temporary Assistance (TA)

Health Care Worker Bonus payments received by eligible individuals must be excluded as income when determining eligibility for initial and ongoing TA. In addition, the bonus payment(s) must be excluded as a resource for ongoing TA and excluded as an available resource to meet an emergency need when determining eligibility for emergency assistance under Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children (EAF) and Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA).

The Health Care Worker Bonus payment(s) is also excluded as a lump sum for the month of receipt of the bonus payment(s) and the following two months.

For example, if a household receives the bonus payment(s) in April 2023, the district must not count it as income or a resource for April and must exempt it as a countable resource for May and June. In July, if the household has remaining funds from the bonus payment(s), the district must count the remaining funds as a resource.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

For SNAP, any Health Care Worker Bonus paid to individuals are excluded from consideration as income. For any household subject to a resource test, these payments are considered countable resources in the month received and in subsequent months as long as they remain readily available to the household.

### **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)**

Health Care Worker Bonus payments are excluded as countable income and liquid resources for HEAP eligibility determinations. These payments must not be counted in the HEAP budget for Regular, Emergency, Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR), Heating Equipment Clean and Tune (C&T), and Cooling Assistance benefits. Any remaining balance from these payments are not considered a liquid resource for the Emergency and HERR benefit components.