

**MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFIT SERVICES (DEBS)
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS—MAY 19, 2009**

NO.	PRIORITY	AUDIT RECOMMENDATION	STAFF RESPONSE	RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE ACTION
Section 1: SSI Advocacy Program—Increased Medi-Cal Reimbursement of Health and Hospital System Costs				
1.1*	1	The Social Services Agency should transmit its monthly report of SSI approvals directly to each of the following Health and Hospital System billing units (in addition to the PBS Hospital/Clinic Billing Unit), including (1) PBS-Professional Services Billing, (2) Ambulatory Pharmacy Services Billing, (3) PBS-Mental Health Services Billing, (4) Mental Health Department Administration, (5) Public Health Department Lenzen Pharmacy Billing, and (6) HHS-Fiscal Services.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree. Implemented.	Implemented.
1.2	1	The Health and Hospital System should temporarily prepare and adopt a comprehensive, detailed written procedure to govern the processing of the monthly report of SSI approvals by all billing units in the Health and Hospital	<u>HHS</u> : Partially agree. HHS agrees that there needs to be better coordination and communication around retroactive SSI Medi-Cal billing. PBS is undergoing a transformation as part of T2010. Several changes have already been implemented or are pending implementation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning a dedicated PBS manager to the 	Do not approve for implementation. However, the Committee approved Vice Chair Cortese's recommendation for the Management

		System.	<p>Mental Health/Drug and Alcohol unit, and providing intensive training to this manager in using the Unicare billing system. (Implemented 2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional billing through the Signature system will be incorporated into the current payor based units throughout PBS. (Pending implementation second quarter 2009) • A dedicated Financial Clearance Center has been established for VMC to check Medi-Cal and other program eligibility of all patients for all scheduled visits five days prior to the visit. (Partially implemented fourth quarter 2008—at limited service sites; to be expanded) <p>In addition, PBS is committed to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning a PBS manager oversight responsibility and a PBS staff person (PBS clerk or Senior PBS clerk) responsibility for coordinating distribution of the SSI lists, tracking completion of necessary research, billing, and reporting, and compiling necessary data for annual reporting. • Adding new insurance plan to uniquely identify accounts that were re-billed for retro SSI Medi-Cal to be used to track and report billing and payment on accounts through the Invision, Signature and Unicare systems. 	Auditor to perform a six-month review and submit an audit tracking report to the Committee and the Board for consideration. This six-month review will include detailed reporting on the Health and Hospital System's efforts to date to track and report the revenues collected from retroactive billing of Medi-Cal.
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1.3	1	The Health and Hospital System should conduct procedures training of all HHS staff who are responsible to research HHS patient records for all General Assistance clients on the monthly list of SSI approvals, and to prepare and process retroactive Medi-Cal bills.	HHS: Partially agree. Partially implemented. (See above.)	(See above.)
1.4	1	The Health and Hospital System should create a new PBS-Retroactive Medi-Cal Unit staffed with a Senior or Supervising Patient Business Services Clerk responsible to oversee the monthly processing of SSI approval lists	HHS: Disagree. There is no need for the addition or deletion of positions to make these changes. (See above.)	(See above.)

		received from the Social Services Agency, and to prepare monthly activity and collections reports. The HHS should submit and amendment to the Annual Salary Ordinance adding this position and deleting one or more of the 16 vacant positions in the Patient Business Services Division in order to make the creation and staffing of the new unit cost neutral.		
Section 2: County-wide Cost Effectiveness of the SSI Advocacy Unit				
2.1*	1	The Social Services Agency should train all eligibility workers to recognize and refer cases of potential disability, set targets for increased referral rates, and monitor referrals from the existing list of “unemployables” in order to ensure the timely referral of all disabled General Assistance clients. The SSI Advocacy Unit supervisor should also review the list of unemployable General Assistance recipients every six months to ensure that no potentially disabled clients have been overlooked by eligibility worker screening.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree. DEBS will continue to train eligibility workers to recognize and refer cases of potential disability as well as monitor referrals from the “unemployables” list. Eligibility workers will continue to process the reimbursement agreements at the time the client applies for General Assistance, thus ensuring IAR recoupment if and when SSI is approved. In addition, Vocational Services will continue to refer to the SSI Advocacy Unit cases that they believe would be eligible for SSI.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
2.2	1	The Social Services Agency	<u>SSA</u> : Partially agree. DEBS will continue to	Refer to SSA for

		<p>should continually monitor the number of SSI approvals resulting from the work of the SSI Advocacy Unit, calculate the average County-wide cost/benefit of the workers assigned to the Unit, and progressively add social worker codes to the SSI Advocacy Unit as long as it operates on a County-wide cost-recovery basis. It is further recommended that the SSI Advocacy Unit maintain a log of case approvals as described in this section.</p>	<p>carefully monitor the work of the unit and its annual budget to ensure that staffing is appropriate to the needs of the population.</p>	<p>implementation.</p>
2.3*	3	<p>The Social Services Agency should improve the SSI Advocacy Unit management information system by developing a comprehensive set of periodic (monthly/daily) reports, so that the Unit Supervisor receives and monitors information on caseload of each worker, backlogged cases, cases completed per worker and in total, length of time to complete cases, amount of General Assistance recovered, amount of Medi-Cal reimbursement received by HHS, and other data as appropriate.</p>	<p>SSA: Agree. DEBS agrees that effective management reports, and the supervisor's review of these reports, are critical to the efficient operation of the unit. The information for some of the measures (i.e., financials/approvals) occurs on a monthly basis and information for others (i.e., HHS Medi-Cal reimbursements) is not produced by SSA. A number of current reports, including DEBS dashboard, provide much of the information requested. These reports will be shared with the Unit Supervisor and social workers.</p>	<p>Refer to SSA for implementation.</p>
<p>Section 3: Generic Intake Caseload Standard</p>				

3.1*	1	<p>The Social Services Agency should meet and confer with the Eligibility Workers' bargaining unit to establish a new caseload range for Generic Intake Workers. A range should be utilized in order to allow for the varying degrees of efficiency, experience, and motivation among workers and to recognize that case difficulty and therefore processing time varies by applicant. Based on reported average workload in the most populous counties, the range should be about 44 to 48 applications per worker per month.</p>	<p>SSA: Agree.</p>	<p>Refer to SSA for implementation.</p>
3.2*	1	<p>Based on implementation of Recommendation 3.1, the Social Services Agency should eliminate the practice of habitual overtime for Generic Intake Workers, since the need for overtime would be substantially reduced as a result of workers processing an average of 44 or more applications monthly.</p>	<p>SSA: Conditionally agree, subject to contract revision in 3.1.</p>	<p>Refer to SSA for implementation.</p>
3.3	1	<p>The Social Services Agency should eliminate 15 Eligibility Worker III (Generic Intake) positions by eliminating some or all of the 14 Agency-wide Eligibility Worker III vacancies.</p>	<p>SSA: Disagree. As a result of the 2008-2011 recession, it is expected that intakes will continue to dramatically increase. Applications for assistance have increased 20-30 percent over 2007.</p>	<p>Do not approve for implementation.</p>

		Remaining eliminations may be achieved through attrition.		
3.4*	1	The Social Services Agency should cease the practice of giving workers full “case credit” for clients who do not show up for scheduled appointments. While credit should only be given for actual cases worked, the Agency should grant a fractional credit for the effort required to cancel an application.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
3.5*	2	The Social Services Agency should require the AAC, North County and South County to “overbook” intake appointments, since there is an overall 14.8% “no-show” rate. The Agency should develop a system to route clients to the next available Generic Intake Worker when a scheduled client does not arrive.	<u>SSA</u> : Conditionally agree, subject to contract revision in 3.4.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
Section 4: Telephone-based Food Stamp Assistance				
4.1*	1	The Social Services Agency should establish a steering committee to develop a plan, with a timeline in addition to staffing and facility requirements, to transition from the traditional approach of handling continuing Non-assistance Food Stamp cases	<u>SSA</u> : Agree. Planning for an expanded call center function is already underway. The Board of Supervisors has already approved a development contract for this purpose. The Department is also implementing a waiver of face-to-face interviews for food stamp recertification in April 2009.	Refer to SSA for implementation.

		at district and other offices to the call center approach.		
4.2*	2	Analyze the caseload standards for continuing Eligibility Workers who remain at district and other offices and no longer handle Non-Assistance Food Stamp cases, and adjust the standards through labor negotiations to reflect the change in workload.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
Section 5: Triage of General Assistance Applications				
5.1*	3	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should create more detailed procedures for the triage evaluation of Food Stamp applications, including what forms applicants must fill out, how the Triage Eligibility Worker should evaluate the information provided, and what supplemental questions the worker should ask to determine which applicants are eligible for expedited services.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
5.2*	3	Redesign the existing Triage Screening Sheet to provide coded boxes that can be used to indicate reasons why an applicant was rejected for expedited services.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
Section 6: Public Assistance Fraud Referrals				
6.1*	1	Provide staff with comprehensive, ongoing public assistance fraud	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.

		training focused on the importance of recognizing and reporting instances of potential fraud, and including periodic reporting of the results of prior investigations and prosecution.		
6.2*	1	Develop and implement improved training and public assistance fraud identification and reporting policies and procedures.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
6.3*	2	Review and adjust Investigator staffing on an annual basis in accordance with changes in the volume of public assistance fraud referrals and the related savings realized.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
Section 7: Department Span of Control				
7.1	2	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should increase its span of control by eliminating at least eight full-time supervisor positions, thereby achieving a ratio of approximately 8.3 staff per supervisor. In eliminating supervisor positions, the Department should target units with a span of control of 6.0 or fewer staff per supervisor. For units that handle benefits, the reduction should aim to maintain a span of control of no more than	<u>SSA</u> : Agree with specific exceptions. The recommendation to aim at a target of 8.3 is considered reasonable, but there are units where the ratio is less than 1:8:3 due to the small size of the office staff or where other unique circumstances exist.	Do not approve for implementation.

		8.0 staff per supervisor in intake units and at least 8.0 staff per supervisor in continuing units.		
7.2	3	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should re-examine and adjust the span of control to maintain a ratio of approximately 8.3 staff per supervisor with the elimination of the 15 full-time Eligibility Workers recommended in Section 3, or any other staff positions in the current or a future fiscal year.	<u>SSA</u> : Disagree. Recommendation 3.3 was rejected.	Do not approve for implementation.
7.3*	2	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should develop reports in Business Objects that provide summary information on useful indicators of eligibility staff performance and productivity, including but not limited to the following: A. Intake workers—number of applications assigned, number of appointments scheduled, percent of appointments held, average length of time for appointments held, and average number of days assigned to an application; and,	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.

		B. Continuing workers— number of cases assigned, number of appointments scheduled, percent of appointments held, average length of time for appointments held, percent of re-determinations overdue, percent of periodic reports not processed, and number of cases discontinued.		
7.4*	2	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should determine whether any of the new indicators should become a dashboard measure as part of the Department’s performance based budgeting.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree. The dashboard tool is flexible to accommodate tracking and monitoring of any new additional indicators in the future as deemed appropriate. The DEBS dashboard measures are reviewed at the monthly DEBS/DIS meeting.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
7.5*	3	The Social Services Agency should review the span of control in every other department in the Agency and require departments with a span of control of less than 8.0 staff per supervisor to reduce the number of supervisors.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree. The Agency will review on a program-by-program basis to determine whether supervisor spans are appropriate.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
7.6*	3	The Office of Budget and Analysis should calculate the span of control for individual departments in the Social Services Agency as part of its annual span of control	<u>OBA</u> : Agree. Report provided. Implemented.	Implemented.

		analysis.		
Section 8: Sick Leave Usage and Morale				
8.1*	1	The Social Services Agency should establish a formal policy and procedure on the use of sick leave in accordance with leave provisions in the County's labor agreements, including the requirement that employees present a physician's statement describing the reason(s) for the use of sick leave with pay that extends beyond three consecutive working days.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree	Refer to SSA for implementation.
8.2*	1	The Employee Services Agency should report on the costs, benefits and requirements of providing all County employees with the added benefit of converting portions of unused sick leave to retirement credit.	<u>ESA</u> : Agree. Report provided. Implemented.	Implemented.
8.3*	1	The Employee Services Agency should develop programs that reward employees for reducing their use of sick leave. This could include providing rewards in the form of retirement credit, compensatory time off, and/or employee recognition. Approval and implementation of any proposed program would require	<u>ESA</u> : Report provided. Agree to look into implementation of reward programs that would not require formal negotiations but rather those that can be approved and implemented by the Board of Supervisors.	Implemented.

		approval of the Board of Supervisors.		
8.4*	2	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should develop programs that recognize employees for exhibiting positive behavior, such as outstanding customer service, high performance, or innovative workload management.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree. DEBS will continue to look at effective ways of expanding its employee recognition efforts.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
8.5*	2	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should more closely monitor the use of sick leave by division and across the Department in order to determine changing patterns, such as increased or decreased usage compared to the County-wide average or sick leave usage adjacent to holidays and weekends, and direct supervisors to note excessive sick leave usage as part of the performance evaluations recommended in Section 9.	<u>SSA</u> : Agree.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
Section 9: Staff Training and Performance Reviews				
9.1	3	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should provide more training and online training in the areas requested by staff, including interoffice	<u>SSA</u> : Conditionally agree. We agree with the concepts in the recommendation, with the caveat that DEBS must prudently weigh release time to productive work time. Two training sessions were offered in January, focused on customer service and	Do not approve for implementation.

		relations/professional development, worker efficiency and customer service.	e-case management. We also have provided a “performance management” series to DEBS supervisors and managers. This is an eight-week soft skills course that targets areas such as interoffice relations/professional development, worker efficiency and customer service.	
9.2*	3	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should follow through with implementing the Learning Management System to allow for the accurate and thorough record keeping of training provided to employees.	SSA: Agree. The Social Services Agency will implement a pilot phase of the learning management system in April/May 2009, with general availability anticipated in July 2009. It is our plan to include e-learning in the Learning Management System during the next phase of implementation.	Refer to SSA for implementation.
9.3*	3	The Department of Employment and Benefit Services should conduct performance evaluations on an annual basis in accordance with the requirements of labor agreements, and include a discussion of training and development, as well as promotional opportunities, during all evaluations conducted.	SSA: Agree. The Agency is in dialogue with Local 521 to determine whether existing 715 evaluation tools may be utilized in evaluating Local 535 legacy employees, or whether a new instrument is required. As soon as this is determined, an evaluation schedule for staff will be implemented.	Refer to SSA for implementation.