

**FAMILY SERVICES AND HOUSING CIRCULAR**

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**CIRCULAR NUMBER: EIA #2008-35 (R)**

**Alternate Program(s):**

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**To:** Community Social Service Supervisors/Program Managers

**Subject: Rewarding Work Health Plan**

**Reference: EIA Administrative Manual**

22.1.11 Extended Health Services Assistance will change to Rewarding Work Health Plan

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**Type:** X Policy Replaces # 92-59

X Procedure

Rate

Information Only

**Effective Date** December 1, 2008

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**Rewarding Work Health Plan (RWHP)**

Effective December 2008, Single Parents (MA/FA) and Persons with Disabilities (DIS) who leave income assistance due to employment will be eligible for the new Rewarding Work Health Plan (RWHP) which will provide optical, dental and drug benefits for 24 months. The RWHP will ease the transition to employment by providing some continued support after income assistance benefits end. The first cases eligible for the RWHP will be those that close in December 2008.

Replacing the Extended Health Benefit policy also known as HEX, the RWHP increases the benefit from 12 months to 24 months. It also simplifies the eligibility criteria by removing the requirement for ongoing needs or income testing. All single parents and persons with disabilities with a Social Assistance Health Services (SAHS) card who leave EIA for employment will be eligible, regardless of their income after they leave EIA and regardless of their need for drug, dental and optical benefits.

**Attachment 1 outlines the process in detail for administering the RWHP.**

Eligibility is determined at the time of the EIA file closure. Participants must satisfy the following criteria:

- have been receiving income assistance for at least three consecutive months during the current period of EIA enrollment (single parents and persons with disabilities need to receive EIA for three months before they are eligible for health benefits).

- be enrolled as a Person with a Disability or a Single Parent at the time of case closure;
- be eligible for the SAHS card while receiving income assistance benefits; and
- have confirmed employment on the day their income assistance file closes.

When case coordinators/counselors do not have confirmation of employment, including self-employment, on the file, a letter should be sent to the participant advising them of their potential eligibility and requesting that they contact staff within 45 days to provide confirmation of employment.

Once case coordinators/counselors, determine eligibility, the file should be closed, re-opened as a Rewarding Work Health Plan case (ALT-HEX) and transferred electronically to Provincial Services (PRSS). Provincial Services will be responsible for the administration of RWHP benefits. See Attachment 1 for further instructions on this process.

Recipients will no longer be eligible for the RWHP if they move out of province. The onus is on the recipient to contact Provincial Services to advise if they move out of province.

Participants who obtain extended health benefit coverage through an employer will continue to be eligible for the RWHP. However, they will be expected to use their other coverage first, and the RWHP will pay any remaining balance, up to allowable maximum benefits.

The RWHP will be cancelled for people who return to EIA and are issued benefits for continuous needs within the 24 month period. The RWHP will continue for people who receive help for non-continuous needs, such as a single grant.

Only individuals whose names are listed on the file prior to case closure are eligible to receive the RWHP. Individuals that join the family after eligibility is determined for the RWHP will not be eligible with the exception of children in care who are returned to their parents. In circumstances where the child was apprehended at birth, Provincial Services will electronically transfer the file back to the originating EIA office to add the dependent and upon completion, transfer the case back to Provincial Services.

If participants return to EIA while they are still receiving the RWHP, the normal three-month waiting period for health benefits while on EIA will be waived. They will be eligible to receive the RWHP again if they leave the program for employment subsequent times. Each time they leave for employment they will be eligible for RWHP for 24 months.

Single parents whose last child turns 18 during the 24 month eligibility period will continue to be eligible for the RWHP.

Cases that are receiving Extended Health Benefits (HEX) as of the end of November 2008 will be transferred to the RWHP and will receive 24 months of benefits, less the number of months they have received prior to December 1, 2008. EIA Program staff will be administering the transfer of these cases to the RWHP; no action is required by case counselors and coordinators.

Provincial Services will answer inquiries from the public regarding the RWHP and will update information in SAMIN for the purpose of administering the benefit.

If you have any questions regarding administration of the benefit by Provincial Services, please phone Provincial Services at 204-945-2197 or e-mail [provservice@gov.mb.ca](mailto:provservice@gov.mb.ca).

## **ATTACHMENT 1** **Rewarding Work Health Plan**

To be eligible for the RWHP, participants must have been receiving income assistance for three continuous months and demonstrate that they have a job on the day their case closed.

### **Confirmation of Employment/Earned Income**

“Confirmation of employment” includes the following:

- A paystub or a letter from the employer.
- Income declarations that have been submitted for all income sources by participants who have historically declared earned income and have achieved exit point due to earnings.
- Approved self-employment plans which have been monitored over time for participants who have begun to earn sufficient income to achieve exit point.
- A Registration of Business certificate and a business plan that demonstrates sufficient earned income will be generated to maintain self-sufficiency will be deemed eligible for participants who are starting a new self-employment business.
- Declared earned income for participants who are employed on a regular part-time basis and who become eligible for on-going unearned income (such as CPP-D) that results in exit point being achieved. The existence of an on-going earned income source will result in eligibility even if it is the unearned income source that resulted in exit point being achieved.

In all situations where the employment scenario meets the above “confirmation of employment” criteria, including those under investigation, participants will remain eligible for the Rewarding Work Health Plan.

### **Single Parent or Persons with Disabilities case closure scenarios**

#### **1. Case closed by Case Coordinator due to employment**

When a case closes due to earnings or because a participant declares that he/she has found employment, staff should request a copy of the participant’s pay stub, or other documentation of employment. This document should be retained on the participant’s file. If a pay stub is already on file, employment may be considered confirmed.

Case is closed and case closure letter CLL1 sent.

When eligible for the RWHP, the case is reopened as HEX (staff must use same SAMIN code – HEX for RWHP) and this file transferred to Provincial Services (PRSS see section on Transfer case).

## 2. Case closed by Case Coordinator but unsure of employment

When a case is closed manually but employment has not been confirmed, a letter will need to be sent out manually to the participant(s), in addition to the regular case closure letter (CLL2).

Participants will be given 45 days from the date of the letter to contact their Case Coordinator/Counsellor and provide proof of employment. If employment is confirmed within 45 days, staff should retain documentation on the file, re-open the case as Alt HEX, and transfer the case electronically to Provincial Services.

Participants requesting benefits after 45 days may be considered if departmental staff are satisfied that the letter may not have been received by the participant.

If a participant contacts EIA in response to the RWGC letter, and EIA determines they do not meet the RWHP eligibility criteria, staff should send a letter (FWAP) to the participant advising that they have the right to appeal the decision.

### **Participant Eligible**

Provincial Services will send a letter welcoming the participant to the RWHP and advising them of the case transfer.

Provincial Services will handle address changes.

Two months prior to the RWRA terminating for a participant, Provincial Services will send a letter notifying the participant(s) that their benefits will be ending. When the benefit ends, Provincial Services will transfer the case back to the originating district office.

### **Continuous Needs**

If a participant receives EIA benefits for continuous needs, s/he is no longer eligible for the RWHP.

EIA service delivery staff are to electronically request that the file be transferred from Provincial Services to enable the EIA file to be re-opened for continuous benefits.

### **Non-Continuous Needs**

If a Single Grant is required to be paid out on the case while it is receiving RWHP, the following steps must occur:

- a. Provincial Services transfers the case to the requesting district office
- b. The originating district office opens the case via OPCA, determines eligibility for and issues the single grant.
- c. The originating district office closes the case using the Status Reason Code Closure SAMIN code OT, reopens the case as Alt HEX and transfers it back to Provincial Services.

## **Provision of Over the Counter Products**

There are some over-the-counter products on the EIA formulary, such as nutritional supplements, that require purchase vouchers. Participants on the RWHP are still eligible for these products under the EIA Drug Formulary.

If an individual has a prescription for a nutritional supplement at the time of case closure, the monthly EIA budget must include the SAMIN code for Health Diet Food Supplement and enter the appropriate case note.

Staff would still be required to ensure that a prescription for the nutritional supplement is on file and if possible, enter the end date consistent with end of the RWHP (24 months from the date of closure). When circumstances warrant more frequent review dates, EIA staff can work with Provincial Services staff to manage these exceptional situations.

If an individual receives a new prescription for a product that requires a purchase voucher after the case has been transferred to Provincial Services, a purchase voucher will need to be issued by EIA staff, using the Single Grant process described above.

## **Investigations**

If an investigation reveals that a participant was not eligible for EIA, and consequently the Rewarding Work Health Plan at the time of case closure, the Rewarding Work Health Plan should be cancelled and an overpayment assessed on health benefits paid out since case closure, above the allowable Pharmacare deductible.

It will be the responsibility of Program Managers/Supervisors to advise Provincial Services via email ([provservice@gov.mb.ca](mailto:provservice@gov.mb.ca)) immediately after a decision has been rendered that the Rewarding Work Health Plan is to be cancelled. The decision letter sent by the Community Area/Region to the participant should also note that Rewarding Work Health Plan benefits will be cancelled.

## **Appeals**

The participant is eligible to appeal the decision that s/he is not eligible for the RWHP. These types of appeals will be handled by the EIA office that determined the case was not eligible for the RWHP.

Appeals related to the provision of optical, dental and drug benefits will be handled by Provincial Services.