# Important Points for Direct Certification with Medicaid

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Demonstration Project to Evaluate Direct Certification with Medicaid. This project allows school food authorities (SFAs) to use Medicaid as a method of directly certifying children for free or reduced-price meals. This handout summarizes the important points that SFAs must consider when directly certifying children through Medicaid. All personnel involved with the process of certifying applications and conducting verification should review this document.

## **No Applications**

Households that are directly certified based on Medicaid data are not required to submit applications for school meal benefits and are not subject to verification.

# **Direct Certification Codes**

Effective July 2017, the direct certification list includes the codes below.

FS (SNAP benefits)	Free benefits extend to all children in the household
<b>AF</b> (Temporary Family Assistance)	Free benefits extend to all children in the household
<b>OT</b> (Other, e.g., foster child, homeless, runaway, or Head Start)	Free benefits do <b>not</b> extend to all children in the household
FM (Free Medicaid)	Free benefits extend to all children in the household
<b>RM</b> (Reduced Medicaid)	Reduced-price benefits extend to all children in the household

### **Reduced-price Children Determined through Medicaid**

Due to differences in household definition and income assessments between programs, some children directly certified for **reduced-price** meals through Medicaid may have been eligible for free meals if the household applied. The USDA requires that these households receive notice of the income level used and be offered the opportunity to apply if their income, based on National School Lunch Program (NSLP) eligibility policies, is within the limit for free meals (using the NSLP's current income eligibility guidelines). The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) parent notification letter (version 3), *Reduced-price Eligibility Established through Direct Certification Based on Medicaid Benefits*, includes the income eligibility guidelines. This form is available in English and Spanish on the CSDE's Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Milk in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

#### **Direct Certification Using Handwritten Case Numbers**

Under the Medicaid pilot, children are not considered to be categorically eligible and may be directly certified **only via an automated data matching process with the Medicaid eligibility records**. Therefore, households are not allowed to handwrite their Medicaid case number on the application or provide "proof" of Medicaid in order for their child to be eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

#### **Negative Impact and Medicaid Determination**

Students already certified for free or reduced-price meals based on an application or direct certification with another program cannot be negatively impacted by the match with Medicaid data. The CSDE has safeguards to ensure that direct certification for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Family Assistance supersede a free or reduced status given through Medicaid. However, if a local educational agency (LEA) has determined that a child is directly certified as reduced-price eligible through Medicaid, and the child is determined to be homeless, a runaway, enrolled in a federally funded Head Start Program, or is a foster child; the LEA's determination supersedes the Medicaid reduced-price status. Children already certified for reduced-price meals through the application process are not changed to full-price meals based on the Medicaid match.

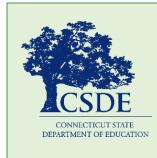
# **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)**

Increasing the number of direct certifications for **free** school meals via matching with Medicaid has a direct impact on a school's/district's identified student percentage (ISP) under the Community Eligibility Provision. However, direct certifications for reduced-price meals will not impact the ISP, since the ISP is the percentage of students certified for **free** meals without an application.

### **Verification and Medicaid**

If a child is directly certified as FM (Free Medicaid) on the direct certification list, the child (and all applicable children in the household) must be included in Section 3-3 of the Verification Collection Report (FNS 742). Section 3-3 reports the following: "Students directly certified through other programs: Include those directly certified through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Medicaid (if applicable); those documented as homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, Head Start, Pre-K Even Start, or non-applicant but approved by local officials." Children identified as RM (Reduced Medicaid) are not reported on the district's Verification Collection Report at this time.

# **Important Points for Direct Certification with Medicaid**



For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Direct Certification for School Nutrition Programs webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/DirectCert/DCMedicaidPoints.pdf.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of age, ancestry, color, criminal record (in state employment and licensing), gender identity or expression, genetic information, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, mental disability (past or present), national origin, physical disability (including blindness), race, religious creed, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, sex (pregnancy or sexual harassment), sexual orientation, veteran status or workplace hazards to reproductive systems, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes.

Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Levy Gillespie, Equal Employment Opportunity Director/Americans with Disabilities Coordinator (ADA), Connecticut State Department of Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 607, Hartford, CT 06103, 860-807-2071, levy.gillespie@ct.gov.