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TO: Income Maintenance Supervisors
Income Maintenance Lead Workers
Income Maintenance Staff
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators

FROM: Janice Peters, Director
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Division of Family and Economic Security

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| DFES OPERATIONS MEMO | | | | | |
| No: 10-29 | | | | | |
| DATE: MARCH 30, 2010 | | | | | |
| FS | <input type="checkbox"/> | MA | <input type="checkbox"/> | BC+ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| SC | <input type="checkbox"/> | CTS | <input type="checkbox"/> | CC | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| W-2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | FSET | <input type="checkbox"/> | EA | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CF | <input type="checkbox"/> | JAL | <input type="checkbox"/> | JC | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RAP | <input type="checkbox"/> | WIA | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> * |
| EP | | | | | |
| PRIORITY: HIGH | | | | | |

SUBJECT: W-2 Screening and Assessment

CROSS REFERENCE: [Operations Memo 08-44, Barrier Screening Tool Update](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 1, 2010

PURPOSE

This memo includes:

1. A new release of Chapter 5 of the W-2 Manual, now titled *Screening and Assessment*,
2. An overview of the screening and assessment policies in Chapter 5 that have changed; and
3. Release of two new W-2 medical assessment forms.

BACKGROUND

Screening and assessment policies have continued to evolve since the implementation of W-2 resulting in a greater focus on screening and assessment in recent years. An advisory group consisting of W-2 agency representatives, Regional Office staff and program advocates convened in 2006 to begin looking at how W-2 screening and assessment policies and procedures were being implemented by W-2 agencies and to determine where improvements could be made to serve W-2 participants more effectively. The first changes to be implemented as the result of this advisory group were covered in Operations Memo 08-44, Barrier Screening Tool Updates.

The remainder of the policy changes recommended by the advisory group are covered through a new release of Wisconsin Works Manual, Chapter 5, Screening and Assessment, which is attached to this memo. Changes to the policy found in Chapter 5 include the following:

1. Some new assessment policies have been added. This memo will highlight the policies that are new;
2. Many existing screening and assessment policies and definitions were rewritten in order to better clarify program expectations and also to improve the flow of language in the chapter.
3. Policy on up-front job search and job readiness as well as information about what activities constitute job search and job readiness has been moved to Chapter 2 and will be added in the next release of Chapter 2.
4. Policy on Eligibility for Vista Volunteers has been removed and will be added in the next release of Chapter 1.
5. A number of screening and assessment policies that were previously released through Operations Memos are now incorporated into Chapter 5. These Operations Memos will be flagged as obsolete, including:
 - Operations Memo 03-16, Barrier Screening Tool Implementation Information;
 - Operations Memo 03-17, Requesting Security Access to the New Web-Based Barriers Screening Application for Wisconsin Works (W-2) Agencies;
 - Operations Memo 03-37, W-2 Barrier Screening Tool Updates;
 - Operations Memo 03-65, Addition of Family Needs Questions to Barrier Screening Tool;
 - Operations Memo 03-71, W-2 Screening and Assessment Policy Questions and Answers;
 - Operations Memo 03-77, Educational Needs Assessment for Wisconsin Works Applicants;
 - Operations Memo 04-21, Policy Q&A on Educational Needs Assessment for Wisconsin Works Applicants; and
 - Operations Memo 04-23, W-2 Payment Reduction Policy Changes.

Agencies should complete a thorough review of the full Chapter 5 with their case managers in order to ensure a thorough understanding of the current screening and assessment policy expectations.

In addition to recommendations on policy, the workgroup also reviewed and made recommendations for two new medical forms (see attached). These two new forms will replace the current Medical Examination & Capacity form effective May 1, 2010. These forms were piloted by a number of W-2 agencies in 2008 and adjustments to the forms were made based on agency feedback.

POLICY CHANGE

Below is a summary of the new screening and assessment policies laid out by W-2 Manual sections:

Section 5.1.1: Provides a new definition of *Assessment*.

Section 5.1.2: Includes policy for placing an individual in the initial W-2 placement while formal assessment results are pending.

Section 5.2.1: Provides an updated definition of *Informal Assessment* and gives examples of how informal assessment is conducted.

Section 5.2.2: Includes a number of new topics that should be covered with applicants and participants as part of the Informal Assessment Inventory.

Section 5.5.1: Provides a new definition of Formal Assessment.

Section 5.5.2: Adds a new condition to the list of circumstances that require the worker to refer an individual for formal assessment (See #1 under Section 5.5.2).

Section 5.5.3: Includes policy for making placement decisions while formal assessment results are pending.

Section 5.5.5: Includes adjustments to what are considered the *Necessary Elements* of a formal assessment.

Section 5.5.6: Covers the process of gathering formal assessment information. This section is completely new and should be reviewed in conjunction with the new medical forms also covered in this Operations Memo.

Section 5.5.7: Covers how to address inadequate or conflicting formal assessment information. Although this section is new, some of the language was covered in a previous Question and Answer document released to agencies via Operations Memo 03-71.

Section 5.5.8: Covers agency requirement to pay for formal assessment when the cost of a needed assessment is not covered by a third-party source such as Medicaid.

Section 5.5.10: Covers how to address circumstances where a participant declines to engage in formal assessment. Although this section is new, some of the language was covered in a previous Question and Answer document released to agencies via Operations Memo 03-71.

NEW MEDICAL FORMS

In recent years, there have been concerns that the current Medical Examination & Capacity form did not provide adequate formal assessment information to the W-2 agency in order to make decisions about W-2 placement, appropriate activities, needed services and accommodations. In addition, the current form focused primarily on medical/physical conditions and therefore was not appropriate for use in gathering mental health information or other types of conditions such as learning or cognitive disabilities.

Two new forms were developed by the advisory group and will replace the current version of the Medical Examination & Capacity form effective May 1, 2010. One form, Mental Health Report ([form 126](#)), focuses on mental health conditions and alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA). The other form will continue to be named the Medical Examination and Capacity ([form 2012](#)) and should be used when participant has other types of medical or physical conditions that require formal assessment.

Chapter 5, Section 5.5.6 provides the new policy instructions for using these forms as well as obtaining formal assessment information for other types of disabilities or when the barrier to employment is related to the care for another household member.

ATTACHMENT

Wisconsin Works Manual, Chapter 5, Screening and Assessment

Mental Health Report ([form 126](#))
Medical Examination and Capacity ([form 2012](#))

CONTACTS

For Policy Related Questions: BWF Regional Office Staff

For CARES Processing Questions: W-2/CC Help Desk

*Program Categories – FS – FoodShare, MA – Medicaid, BC+ – BadgerCare Plus, SC – Senior Care, CTS – Caretaker Supplement, CC – Child Care, W-2 – Wisconsin Works, FSET – FoodShare Employment and Training, CF – Children First, EA – Emergency Assistance, JAL – Job Access Loan, JC - Job Center Programs, RAP – Refugee Assistance Program, WIA – Workforce Investment Act, *Other EP – Other Employment Programs.

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