

February 21, 2014

## CalWORKs Program Guide Letter No. 316

---

**Subject**            **CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE RULES FOR CHILDREN IN A PUBLIC HOSPITAL**

---

**Effective Date**    January 1, 2014

---

**Reference**         All County Letters (ACL) 14-07

---

**Purpose**            To inform Family Resource Center (FRC) staff of changes to the temporary absence regulations for children receiving treatment in a public hospital.

---

**Background**      Current regulations state any member of the assistance unit (AU) is considered temporarily absent when absent from the home for one full calendar month or less, unless an exception applies.

One of the allowed exceptions was when a child, who is a patient in a **public hospital**, would be considered temporarily absent from the home for up to two full calendar months only.

---

**Summary of Updates**    The following CPG sections have been loaded to the online CPG:

CPG Section	Title	Program Updates
<a href="#">41-500.C.3</a>	Temporary Absence from The Assistance Unit	Section updated to reflect the new regulations for child in a public hospital.

Changes to the CPG are noted with **highlighted text**.

---

**Subject:**            **CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE RULES FOR CHILDREN IN A PUBLIC HOSPITAL**

**New Regulations**

Effective January 1, 2014, there is no longer any limit on the length of time a child is considered temporarily absent from the home while receiving treatment in a **public** or **private** hospital, and aid will continue for that child for the entire period of the hospitalization, **regardless of the length of time**.

**Reminder**

Existing regulations already provide no limit on the amount of time a child may be considered temporarily absent if receiving treatment in a **private** hospital. Therefore, even before January 1, 2014, children temporarily absent while receiving treatment in a **private** hospital should have been receiving continued CalWORKs assistance.

---

**Human Services Specialist (HSS) Actions**

The HSS is required to issue a supplement for the month of January 2014 and any subsequent months in which the child was not included in the AU while receiving treatment in a public or private hospital on or after January 1, 2014.

For cases where the child was removed from the AU prior to January 2014 due to staying in a public hospital for longer than two months, at the next contact with the family, such as the client making a mid-period report or submitting a SAR 7, the HSS is required to review the case file to determine if the child remains in the hospital. If so, the HSS is required to issue any appropriate supplements effective January 1, 2014. No supplements shall be issued for any months prior to January 2014.

---

**Examples**

**Example 1**

A child enters a **private** hospital for treatment and remains there for 14 months. Under temporary absence rule exceptions in place before January 1, 2014, the child would be considered temporarily absent for the duration of the hospital stay, 14 months.

**Example 2**

A child enters a **public** hospital for treatment and remains there for 14 months. Under the temporary absence rule exceptions in place before January 1, 2014, the child would only have been considered temporarily absent for two calendar months. Due to the new regulations, the HSSs will now consider the hospitalized child temporarily absent for all 14 months of and will continue to aid the child.

---

**Subject:**

**CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE RULES FOR CHILDREN IN A PUBLIC HOSPITAL**

**Verification**

When a household reports that a child is hospitalized, the HSS is required to document the basis of the temporary absence. Examples of acceptable evidence to support a claim that a child is hospitalized may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Admittance documentation from the hospital;
- A letter from the admitting medical doctor or other legally qualified medical professional;
- Other documentation that the HSS determines to be acceptable evidence that the child has been admitted to the hospital.

The documentation shall include the date the child was admitted to the hospital and, if possible, the anticipated duration of the hospital stay. If the child remains hospitalized beyond the anticipated duration of the hospital stay, the HSS is required to re-verify if the child remains hospitalized.

**SAR - AR/CO Impact**

Because changes in household composition are voluntary mid-period reports for Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) cases but mandatory mid-period reports for Annual Reporting/Child Only (AR/CO) cases, verification shall occur with the SAR 7 or SAWS 2 Plus for SAR cases or any time during the AR/CO payment period for AR/CO cases.

---

**CalFresh Program Impact**

HSS will continue to evaluate household circumstances on a case-by-case basis. The regulations addressed in this letter do not make any changes to CalFresh policy. As such, there may be cases in which individuals who are staying in a hospital for extended periods will be treated differently for the two programs.

---

**Medi-Cal Program Impact**

Per [MPG Article 1, Section 1.1.C - Persons Living in the Home](#), a child temporarily absent from the home shall be considered to be living in the home as long as the parent continues to have responsibility for the care and control of the child. A parent continues to have responsibility for the care and control of a child until the court removes this responsibility or the parent voluntarily relinquishes it.

---

**General Relief Program Impact**

No impact.

---

**Subject:**

**CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE RULES FOR CHILDREN IN A PUBLIC HOSPITAL**

**Child Care  
Program  
Impact**

No impact.

---

**County  
Medical  
Services  
Program  
Impact**

No impact.

---

**Automation  
Impact**

CalWIN changes to reflect these new regulations are work in progress and scheduled to be updated in the near future.

---

**ACCESS  
Impact**

ACCESS Customer Service Agents may receive questions from callers requesting clarification on the CalWORKs changes. The agents shall provide information to callers regarding the regulations changes.

---

**Forms Impact**

No impact.

---

**Document  
Capture  
Impact**

No impact.

---

**Quality  
Control Impact**

Quality Control will cite the appropriate error when the regulations cited in the material have not been followed.

---

**Manager  
Approval**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Wanne, 2-21-14".

**RICK WANNE, MA, MFT**  
Eligibility Operations Director

---

**Manager  
Contact**

CalWORKs Program

**Subject:**

**CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE RULES FOR CHILDREN IN  
A PUBLIC HOSPITAL**

---

RP

**Subject: CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE RULES FOR CHILDREN IN  
A PUBLIC HOSPITAL**