Department of Human Resources 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore MD 21201	**FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL**
Control Number: 13-05	**Effective Date: January 1, 2013** **Issuance Date: November 29, 2012**

TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISOR AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF
HEALTH OFFICERS, LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT ELIGIBILITY STAFF

FROM: ROSEMARY MALONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA
DEBBIE RUPPERT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DHMH/OES

RE: SOCIAL SECURITY (RSDI) AND SSI COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE AND RELATED INCREASES

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: CASH ASSISTANCE, MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAMS

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

Summary:

Recipients of Social Security Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance (RSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) received a 1.7% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2013. Railroad Retirement and Veterans Benefits will also be adjusted by the same percent. This transmittal describes the mass change process and impact of these adjustments on cash assistance, medical assistance and food supplement program benefits.

Action Required:

Effective January 1, 2013, Social Security (RSDI), SSI, Railroad Retirement and Veterans Benefits will increase by 1.7 percent. Local Departments need to understand and apply these changes to all affected programs according to the procedures outlined on the following pages.

NOTE: Count the increase for all cash assistance, medical assistance and food supplement cases beginning with January 2013 benefits. There will be a mass change on December 8, 2012 to update the RSDI, SSI, Railroad Retirement and Veterans Benefits for ongoing cases effective January 1, 2013.

I. SSI and RSDI Benefits Effective January 2013

Federal Living Arrangements*	Amount of SSI Increase	SSI Only		SSI and RSDI	
		Present Benefit 1	New Benefit 2	Present Benefit 3	New Benefit 4**
Individual A or C	12.00	698.00	710.00	718.00	730.00
Couple A	18.00	1048.00	1066.00	1068.00	1086.00
Individual B	8.00	465.34	473.34	485.34	493.34
Couple B	12.67	698.67	710.67	718.67	730.67
Individual with essential person A***	18.00	1067.00	1085.00	1087.00	1105.00
Couple with essential person A	24.00	1417.00	1441.00	1437.00	1461.00
Individual with essential person B	11.99	698.68	710.67	718.68	730.67
Couple with essential person B	16.66	956.70	973.36	976.70	993.36

*A - Independent living arrangement; B - One-third reduction for living in the household of another and receiving support and maintenance from the householder; C - Child living with parents or stepparents whose resources and income are considered in determining the countable income and resources of the child.

** - The benefit in Column 4 is usually $20 more than the benefit in Column 2. The same relationship exists between Columns 3 and 1.

*** - Essential Person Increments:

Living Arrangements	Amount of SSI Increase	Present Benefit	New Benefit
A	$6.00	$350.00	$356.00
B	$3.99	$233.33	$237.32

Rates and Per Diems:

PAA Rates Effective 1/13	Rate	Per Diem
Project Home Level A	**$776**	**25.53**
Project Home Level B	**875**	**29.11**
Project Home Level C	**1173**	**38.58**
Project Home Level D	**1376**	**45.26**
Assisted Living	**894**	**29.41**

The personal needs allowance for all PAA cases, including DHMH Rehabilitative Residence cases, is still $82.00.

For purposes of verifying new RSDI/SSI amounts for individual cases, SVES or the award letter supplied by the customer should be used at the next recertification, or at interim change.

II. PAA Assisted Living and Project Home Cases

In addition to the RSDI/SSI cost-of-living increases effective January 2013, Project Home and assisted living rates also increase as noted in the Rates and Per Diems chart. The increase complies with Federal requirements on State supplementation levels.

For new PAA applications approved in December for January 2013 benefits, use the new RSDI/SSI amounts and/or Project Home or assisted living amount, as applicable. PAA cases in adverse action status will be updated in the mass change.

Attached to this Action Transmittal are copies of letters to be sent to operators of Project Home and licensed Assisted Living facilities to explain these changes.

Please note: for Rehabilitative Residence cases, the allowable need is the cost of the Rehabilitative Residence as paid, not to exceed $54.00 per day.

III. Increase in Railroad Retirement Benefits

Railroad Retirement (RR) benefits will also be adjusted in the mass modification for January 2013.

IV. Increase in Veterans Benefits

The cost-of-living increase in the VA pension program will also be 1.7% effective January 2013. Veterans Benefits will also be adjusted in the mass modification for

January 2013.

V. CARES

On December 8, 2012, the Social Security and SSI cost-of-living income adjustments (COLA) will be made to CARES Assistance Units (AUs) in active or spend-down status. This process, referred to as Mass Modification, causes all assistance units to be put through batch eligibility. Batch eligibility examines each AU for all eligibility factors and determines program type, AU status and benefit level. Case managers will receive an alert (**#224 Grant Changed in Batch**) for any AU with a change in status or benefit level. Also produced, if applicable, are adverse action notices.

CARES will also update the SSA and SSI income fields on cases that are in an active no pay status, providing such income is present on the UINC screen. However, eligibility will not be calculated or notices produced until the case is reactivated.

Inquiries:
Direct policy questions concerning this Action Transmittal to Rick McClendon at (410) 767-7307 and systems questions to Gina Roberts at (410) 238-1249.

Attachments

cc: DHR Executive Staff
DHR Help Desk
DHMH Executive Staff
FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
Policy and Training Staff
OIG

_____Department of Social Services

Name

_____

Address

_____

_____

_____

Date of Notice

_____

Category/Case#

_____

Case Manager

_____

Telephone#

_____

Effective January 2013, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security benefits from the Federal Government will increase. Project Home Levels A, B, C and D rates will also increase.

Depending on whether you receive benefits other than Public Assistance and the care home where you live (Assisted Living or Project Home – Level A, B, C or D), there may be a change in your Public Assistance check. Please see below how your Public Assistance check is now being calculated.

Your Public Assistance check has been computed as follows:

Cost of care	_____
Personal needs allowance	_____
Total needs	_____
Deductions (specify)	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Your benefits under the Public Assistance to Adults program will:

[ ] Stay the same
[ ] Increase to_____ beginning in _____.
[ ] Be reduced to _____ beginning in _____.
[ ] Stop. You received or will receive your last check in _____.

Beginning in January 2013, you owe the cost of care, $_____, to the operator of the facility where you live. The amount of money allowed for personal needs will still be $82.00.

If you have any questions, please call the case manager listed above. You may appeal this decision if you do not agree with it. Information on how to appeal is printed on the other side of this letter.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T AGREE WITH THIS DECISION

1. You can call the telephone number on the other side of this letter and ask for a conference.
   Your case manager will be able to answer any questions you may have.

AND

2. You can also file an appeal. Your local department has the necessary forms and will help you to file an appeal. Call the number on the other side of this letter for appeal forms and more information about how to file an appeal.

   YOUR CHECK MAY BE CONTINUED UNTIL A DECISION IS REACHED ON YOUR APPEAL IF YOU FILE YOUR APPEAL WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE "DATE OF NOTICE" ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS LETTER. YOU MUST FILE YOUR APPEAL WITHIN 90 DAYS OF THE "DATE OF NOTICE" ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS LETTER.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU APPEAL

An appeal hearing will be scheduled at a time and place convenient for you and the officer who will hear your case. You should come to this hearing. If you wish, you can be represented by a lawyer or a friend or relative. You may get legal help through the Maryland Legal Services Program or the Legal Aid Bureau in some areas of the state. In Baltimore City, Legal Aid's Office is at 500 E. Lexington Street (telephone number 410-951-7777). In the counties, your case manager will tell you how to get free legal services.

At least six days before the hearing, the local department will send you a summary of the information used to reach its decision. If you want any employees of the local department to be present at you hearing, you may notify the hearings office and tell why you want these employees to be present. You or your lawyer can look at the documents used by the local department to reach its decision.

A hearings officer will send you a written decision that says whether the local department's decision is found to be correct within 90 days after receiving your appeal request. If the local department's decision is found to be correct, and you have continued to receive an incorrect amount of benefits while waiting for a decision, you may have to repay the public assistance you received to which you were entitled.

If you have any questions about your right to appeal, please call your local department at the telephone number listed on the other side of this letter.

December _, 2012

Operators of Project Home Facilities

Dear Sir or Madam,

Effective January 2013, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security benefits will increase by 1.7%. Based on that increase, the amount the State allows for Project Home levels A, B, C and D and Assisted Living will also increase effective January 2013. Levels A, B, C, D and Assisted Living will increase to $776, $885, $1173, $1376 and $894 respectively. The reason for the increase is the need to comply with Federal requirements regarding payment levels states must maintain for certain classes of SSI recipients. Customers will continue to receive $82.00 for the personal needs allowance.

If customers under your care get Social Security/SSI benefits, there may be changes in their public assistance checks effective January 2013. Local Departments of Social Services will be notifying customers concerning any changes in the amounts of their public assistance checks effective January 2013.

Please inform customers under your care of these changes. If you have questions, please contact Rick McClendon at (410) 767-7307.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Malone, Executive Director
Family Investment Administration

December _, 2012

Operators of Licensed Assisted Living Facilities

Dear Sir or Madam,

Effective January 2013, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security benefits will increase by 1.7%. Based on that increase, the amount the State allows for Assisted Living will be increased to $894, and the amount the customer is allowed for personal needs ($82.00) will remain the same. Local Departments of Social Services will be notifying customers concerning the change in the amount of their public assistance checks effective January 2013. The customer is responsible for paying for their care with the income they receive.

Please inform customers under your care of these changes. If you have any questions, please contact Rick McClendon at (410) 767-7307.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Malone, Executive Director
Family Investment Administration