

**N. C. Division of Aging and Adult Services Administrative Letter No. 17-03
Adult Services Section**

Date: March 1, 2017

Subject: Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and VA COLA for Special Assistance In-Home (SA-IH) Beneficiaries.

Distribution: County Directors
Special Assistance Supervisors
Adult Services Supervisors

Effective Date: April 1, 2017

I. BACKGROUND:

Effective January 1, 2017, SA beneficiaries who receive RSDI/SSI/VA received a 0.3% cost-of-living increase (COLA) in their RSDI/SSI/VA benefits. SA-IH cases were exempt from counting the COLA increase until April 1 2017, after the new federal poverty levels were published. This letter explains how the increase will affect SA-IH payments and the procedures for counties to follow.

II. RECIPIENT NOTICE OF COLA

NC FAST will generate and mail the NCF 20032, SA-IH RSDI/SSI/VA COLA Mass Change Timely Notice, to all active, suspended, and pending closure SA-IH case beneficiaries and their authorized representatives. The Income Support Case, Case Details Tab, Communication Section will be updated to document the date the NCF 20032 is sent. The mailing date for the SA-IH NCF 20032 was February 27, 2017. This will serve as a timely notice.

NC Fast will generate and send DSS-8110's with the new payment amount effective April 1, 2017, and notification of termination of SA-IH payments effective March 31, 2017. This will serve as the Adequate Notice. The issuance of the DSS-8110 adequate notice will **not** be updated on the Communication Tab, instead a report will be posted on Fast Help that lists cases affected by the mass change and will serve as verification of DMA-8110, Adequate Notice issuance.

III. SA-IH Cases Automatically Updated by NC FAST

SA-IH cases in an active, suspended, or pending closure status with a certification period end date after March 31, 2017 affected by the 2017 RSDI/SSI/VA COLA increase will be automatically updated by NC FAST. NC FAST will update benefit evidence to reflect a 0.3% COLA increase. The new SA-IH payment effective April 1, 2017, will be automatically calculated and the system will accept the changed decision **except** for cases in "On Hold" status. Caseworkers will not need to update these cases.

The payment for SA-IH cases that are receiving less than the maximum allowable benefit will not be changed.

IV. SA-IH Cases Not Automatically Updated by NC FAST

SA-IH cases in "On Hold" status will not automatically be updated by NC Fast. These cases will require caseworker review and acceptance of the changed decision. Caseworkers will also need to send the DSS- 8110 Notice to reflect the new payment amount effective April 1, 2017. NC Fast will provide an Exception Report listing the cases that require manual update by the caseworker. Case review and updates in NC FAST must be completed by March 30, 2017.

V. SA-IH Pending Applications

Pending applications will not be automatically updated by NC Fast. All pending applications will require RSDI/SSI/VA benefit evidence to be entered for month(s) prior to April 2017 with an end date of 03/31/2017 and the new RSDI/SSI/VA evidence with a start date of 04/01/2017.

VI. SA-IH COLA Reports

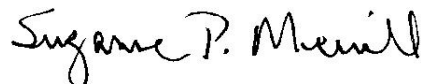
Two SA-IH 2017 COLA Reports will be posted to Fast Help as follows:

- (1) SA-IH Payment Change Report – SA-IH Cases automatically updated by NC Fast and decision automatically accepted.
- (2) SA-IH Exceptions Report – SA-IH cases not automatically updated by NC Fast and require caseworker updates.

Please note: NC Fast will be sending a communication to notify counties when reports are available on Fast Help.

Please contact the Special Assistance listserv, specialassistance@dhhs.nc.gov, with questions.

Sincerely,



Suzanne P. Merrill, Director

SPM: skc