

NJ MEDICAID TAKES ACTION TO ENSURE NURSING HOME RESIDENTS RECEIVE THEIR FEDERAL STIMULUS CHECKS

NJ Human Services Issues Guidance Making Clear Long-Term Care Facility Residents Are Entitled to Their Checks

(TRENTON) – Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson today released guidance making clear that individuals with Medicaid coverage who reside in long-term care facilities are entitled to receive their federal stimulus payments and the payments cannot be retained by the facilities. Further, payments will not be counted as income or considered a Medicaid resource for up to a year. The federal CARES Act provided for economic stimulus payments of up to \$1,200 per adult.

"Stimulus checks are your money whether you live in your own home or in a nursing facility," Commissioner Johnson said. "We've heard concerns and questions from families about the status of this money for older adults living in long-term care facilities. With today's action, we are reminding facilities that Medicaid payments are payment in full and stimulus payments are individuals' money for their own use."

Under the guidance a facility must notify the resident or their authorized representative that the stimulus payment has been received and promptly make the resident's stimulus payment available to access and spend. The facility also should assist the resident in utilizing the funds for their personal needs.

Human Services Assistant Commissioner Jennifer Langer Jacobs, who oversees the state's Medicaid program known as NJ FamilyCare, said facility residents or family members who suspect a facility is withholding a stimulus payment should contact the Medicaid program at 609-588-2556.

"Please don't hesitate to call," Assistant Commissioner Jacobs said. "We want to make certain that Medicaid recipients residing in long-term care facilities receive and have the ability to spend these stimulus payments."

"Older adults living in long-term care facilities or their families deserve the dignity of choosing what to do with their stimulus check," said Human Services' Division of Aging Services Director Louise Rush. "They can spend it or save it as they see fit, but the bottom line is this: it's their decision."