



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Susan Cumbia Clare, M.Ed
Executive Director

OFFICE OF COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES
Administering the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMO #12-05

TO: CPMT CHAIRS
CSA COORDINATORS

FROM: SUSAN CUMBIA CLARE

DATE: MAY 4, 2012

SUBJECT: VDSS BROADCAST REGARDING CHANGES TO VEMAT

The Virginia Department of Social Services has announced upcoming changes to the enhanced maintenance rates that are paid to foster families as a result of administering the "Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Assessment Tool" (VEMAT). The Office of Comprehensive Services wishes to bring your attention to these changes as they will impact upon CSA-funded foster youth who receive enhanced maintenance payments.

Attached for your information are two documents distributed by VDSS. These include:

1. VDSS Broadcast 7423, dated April 27, 2012
2. A letter from Commissioner Martin D. Brown to foster and adoptive parents

Questions about the changes to enhanced maintenance rates should be directed to Therese Wolf, 804-726-7522 or therese.wolf@dss.virginia.gov.

BROADCAST 7423

DATE: April 27, 2012

TO: Local Departments of Social Services Directors, Foster Care and Adoption Supervisors and Staff, Resource Family Recruiters, Trainers, staff and Supervisors, Licensed Child-Placing Agencies, CSA Coordinators

FROM: Jack Ledden, Director, Division of Family Services
Therese Wolf, M.A., Permanency Program Manager

TIME: **5:33 p.m.**

SUBJECT: Changes to Enhanced Maintenance Rates using the Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Assessment Tool (VEMAT)

CONTACT: Therese Wolf, 804-726-7522 or therese.wolf@dss.virginia.gov

The purpose of this broadcast is to inform local departments of social services (LDSS) and all key partners of upcoming changes to the Enhanced Maintenance rates. Please note -- *this change in rates does not impact the basic maintenance rate all foster parents receive nor does it affect any services provided to the foster child.*

Effective July 1, 2012, the enhanced maintenance rates paid as a result of administering the VEMAT will be adjusted to amounts more in line with the national average. This change is a result of several factors including the fact that Virginia's enhanced maintenance rates are among the highest in the nation, the need to adopt a data-driven methodology for determining rates, and an economy that affects all aspects of budgeting. Current expenditures are not sustainable and need to be adjusted to levels that are not exponentially increasing every year.

Data are still being collected to determine the new rates and the amount of the decrease. The actual reduction will be announced by Broadcast as soon as this information is available.

This change to the enhanced rate will occur on a "go-forward" basis only. Local departments must begin using the new rates for every VEMAT administered as of July 1, 2012. Foster parents are to continue receiving their current rate until their next VEMAT review. Localities are advised that all children must receive a VEMAT review before December 31, 2012 using the new rate structure. New adoption assistance agreements negotiated after July 1, 2012 that includes an enhanced maintenance payment must be based on the new rate structure.

It is important that local departments of social services and licensed child placing agencies inform their foster parents of these changes as soon as possible. Agencies are encouraged to include a discussion about these changes in their next training sessions. Providing foster parents with as much information as possible, as soon as possible, would be beneficial in addressing their concerns. A letter from the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to all foster and adoptive parents is available at

http://spark.dss.virginia.gov/divisions/dfs/fc/files/manuals_guidance_procedures/related_links/L

[etter_to_foster_parents.pdf](#) and can be downloaded and used by local departments to share these changes with foster parents. Licensed child placing agencies may get a copy of this letter from their licensing representative.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Commissioner

Martin D. Brown
COMMISSIONER

April 25, 2012

Dear Foster and Adoptive Parents:

The Virginia Department of Social Services recognizes the value of your work as partners in the care of children. As our partner, the Department is committed to sharing information with you that affects your on-going work.

I am writing you to inform you that the current Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Tool (VEMAT) rates cannot be sustained. The cost of VEMAT payments has increased significantly and can no longer continue at current rates. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce the current rates for enhanced maintenance paid as a result of the use of the VEMAT.

This change in rates does not impact the basic maintenance rate all foster parents receive nor does it affect any services provided to the foster child.

We will continue to:

1. Pay the current basic maintenance rates;
2. Honor the rates of existing adoption assistance agreements; and
3. Pay the enhanced maintenance rate for the children currently in your care and not change these rates until your next VEMAT review.

On July 1, 2012, the rates for the VEMAT will be reduced. The amount of the reduction has not yet been determined but you will be notified by your agency once the amount has been determined.

As of March 1, 2012, 3,447 children were assessed using the VEMAT tool. In partnership with you and others, we will continue to compassionately serve the children in foster care and the families who receive enhanced maintenance funds for providing homes to our children.

Thank you for the daily love and care you provide to our children in foster care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Martin D. Brown".

Martin D. Brown