Direct Certification with HUSKY A (Medicaid): Steps to Consider When Working with Point-of-Sale (POS) Software Companies

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Demonstration Project to Evaluate Direct Certification with Medicaid. This project allows school food authorities (SFAs) to use HUSKY A (Medicaid) as a method of directly certifying children for free or reduced-price meals or free milk.

Previously, all direct certifications corresponded to the free meals benefit. However, the income levels of HUSKY A (Medicaid) recipients span a broader range than Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) recipients. While all SNAP and TFA recipients automatically qualify for free meals or free milk, HUSKY A (Medicaid) data will directly certify the student for either free or reduced-price meals or free milk on a case-by-case basis.

This document summarizes the steps that SFAs must consider when working with their software company to update the direct certification process.

Step 1

Notify your POS software company that Connecticut's direct certification system includes HUSKY A (Medicaid) as of July 2017. This means there are two eligibility categories for direct certification: free eligibility and reduced-price eligibility.

Step 2

Discuss with the POS software company their ability to categorize these expanded benefits sources to include free Medicaid and reduced Medicaid. For reporting purposes, all eligibility categories must be distinguished.

Step 3

Determine if the SFA's POS system is automated or manual. If the POS software allows for an automated import of the CSDE's direct certification file, discuss the software's system ability to process the two categories of free Medicaid (FM) and reduced Medicaid (RM). If the POS software allows for the manual input of direct certification data, discuss the need for the system to be able to qualify the determination method and the eligibility type to include free Medicaid and reduced Medicaid.

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Step 4

Discuss the POS system's ability to activate and populate the fields on the Student Eligibility Reports to include categories for free Medicaid and reduced Medicaid.

Step 5

Review the other considerations that apply to direct certification with Medicaid and what impact they may have on the POS system. These considerations are listed below.

- Students determined to be directly certified as free or reduced Medicaid are not subject to verification. Therefore, they cannot be included in the October 1 sample pool of households that are subject to verification. Including these households will lead to verifying more applications than required.
- The POS system must be able to differentiate between the different types of direct certification categories for reporting purposes. The chart below summarizes the direct certification codes and extension of benefits.

Direct certification codes and extension of benefits

Code	Benefits
FS = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits	Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
AF = Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)	Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
OT = foster child	Free benefits do **not** extend to all children in the household.
FM = free Medicaid	Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
RM = reduced Medicaid	Reduced-price benefits extend to all children in the household.

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- There is a hierarchy of eligibility for direct certification. This requires certain considerations when the POS software is allowed to override a determination. For example, **eligibility for SNAP benefits (FS) supersedes all other eligibility categories**. Additionally, a Medicaid match should never overlay an existing direct certification match with another allowable program category (e.g., SNAP, TFA or OT). LEAs must identify a Medicaid match only when the child does not match with SNAP, TFA, or OT.

  Hierarchy of eligibility for direct certification

  1. FS (SNAP benefits): Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
  2. AF (TFA): Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
  3. OT (foster child): Free benefits do not extend to all children in the household.
  4. FM (free Medicaid): Free benefits extend to all children in the household.
  5. RM (reduced Medicaid): Reduced-price benefits extend to all children in the household.

  Example of hierarchy of eligibility: A student is categorized as RM. The latest direct certification file categorizes the student as AF. The student's eligibility category would change to AF and free benefits would extend to all children in the household.

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Resources

Common Acronyms and Abbreviations for Determining Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/acronyms_abbreviations_determining_eligibility_meals_milk_snp.pdf

Considerations for Direct Certification with Medicaid (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/directcert/considerations_direct_certification_medicaid.pdf

Direct Certification Web Application (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/direct-certification

Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/eligibility-for-free-and-reduced-price-meals-and-free-milk-in-school-nutrition-programs

Eligibility Manual for School Meals (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/eligibility-manual-school-meals

Module 3: Direct Certification of Determining Eligibility in the School Nutrition Programs and Summer Food Service Program (CSDE's Eligibility for Free and Reduced-price Meals and Free Milk in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/eligibility-for-free-and-reduced-price-meals-and-free-milk-in-school-nutrition-programs/determining-eligibility-training

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For more information, visit the CSDE's Direct Certification for School Nutrition Programs webpage, or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/directcert/direct_certification_medicaid_steps_pos_software.pdf.

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