

Appendix E.2: Sample DC-M2 State Letter/Email for Demonstration LEAs Informing them of the Study

OMB #: 0584-xxxx  
Expiration Date: xx/xx/20xx

Dear [SFA Director]:

Under the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is conducting demonstrations that add Medicaid to the list of programs used to directly certify students for free meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). In demonstration sites, direct certification for free lunches and breakfasts will be extended to students who (1) are receiving Medicaid and (2) are members of families with income as measured by the Medicaid program, before the application of any expense, block, or other income disregard, that does not exceed 133 percent of the federal poverty guideline for their family size. Direct certification also will be extended to students living in the household with a child who meets criteria (1) and (2) above. [State] is one of six States participating in the demonstrations, and districts in your State will conduct direct certification using Medicaid data for school year (SY) 2012–2013 and SY 2013–2014.

States and selected districts included in the demonstrations will also participate in the direct certification-Medicaid (DC-M) evaluation sponsored by FNS, which will be conducted by Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractor Insight Policy Research. Your district is one of [##] in [State] randomly selected to participate in this evaluation, which is described in the enclosed Study Summary. The primary data collection activities that your district will need to perform for the evaluation are:

*First bullet is included only for the six districts that will be asked to provide enrollment data for the Access Evaluation*

- ***Provide student enrollment files for SY 2011–2012.*** To conduct a simulation of DC-M based on last year's data, the study will require district enrollment data at the individual level containing one record for every student attending schools in the district in SY 2011–2012. Ideally, the district will provide the actual student enrollment files used for the initial direct certification match with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) data, as well as the files used for subsequent matches at two additional points in time during SY 2011–2012. The files should contain all available person identifiers as well as NSLP certification status and information used to determine that status. These data should be provided to Mathematica by [MONTH/YEAR]. In addition, the district should provide details on the rules and algorithms used for matching files for direct certification. Mathematica will contact you to provide further details about the data that are required.
- ***Complete web survey on costs during SY 2012–2013 and SY 2013–2014.*** Districts will be asked to complete a web-based survey in summer 2013 to report on certification costs incurred during SY 2012–2013. In anticipation of this survey, we encourage districts to

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track the hours that each type of staff member spends each month on different activities related to certification, including both application and direct certification processes. During SY 2013–2014, the web survey will be conducted five times, so that districts can report on costs soon after they are incurred.

Two additional data collection activities planned for SY 2013–2014 will involve a smaller subset of demonstration districts. Child nutrition staff in some districts will be asked to participate in a telephone interview about challenges faced implementing DC-M. Some districts may be asked to provide SY 2013–2014 enrollment data for a match validation substudy. If your district is selected for either of these activities, you will be contacted with additional details.

A researcher from Mathematica will contact you within the next week to answer any questions you may have about the study and to provide details on the student enrollment file requirements. For further information on the evaluation in the meantime, please refer to the enclosed Study Summary, or contact Lara Hulsey, Mathematica’s deputy project director for the DC-M evaluation, at 609-936-2778 or [lhulsey@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:lhulsey@mathematica-mpr.com). Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important study.

Sincerely,



## ***The Evaluation of Demonstrations of National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program Direct Certification of Children Receiving Medicaid Benefits***

### **Objectives of the Study**

Under the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (P.L. 111-296), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is conducting demonstrations that add Medicaid to the list of programs used to directly certify students for free meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). In demonstration sites, direct certification for free lunches and breakfasts will be extended to students who (1) are receiving Medicaid or living in the household with a child who receives Medicaid and (2) are members of families with income as measured by the Medicaid program, before the application of any expense, block, or other income disregard, that does not exceed 133 percent of the federal poverty guideline for their family size.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractor Insight Policy Research to conduct the evaluation of direct certification-Medicaid (DC-M). The evaluation will examine the effects of DC-M on participation, costs, and other outcomes. The study includes three investigative areas:

- ***The Access Evaluation*** will identify the potential impacts of DC-M on NSLP/SBP access, based on a retrospective match of Medicaid and student enrollment data files from school year (SY) 2011–2012.
- ***The Costs and Participation Evaluation*** will estimate the effects on costs and participation of DC-M as implemented, and examine the challenges that States and school districts experience in implementing DC-M.
- ***The Assessment of the Socioeconomic Survey (SES) Certification Alternative*** will compare the costs of standard application procedures with and without DC-M to the costs of an SES alternative.

The evaluation will also include a Match Validation Substudy (MVS), which will use varying levels of match stringency to independently validate matches made in a small sample of demonstration districts.

### **Study Participants**

FNS has selected six States to begin participating in the demonstration in SY 2012–2013. In four of these States—Alaska, Florida, Illinois, and New York—school districts were randomly assigned to a demonstration group, which will conduct DC-M, or to a control group, which will not. In two States—Kentucky and Pennsylvania—DC-M will be implemented statewide. Additional States and districts will be selected for SY 2013–2014.



**Data Collection Activities**

Data collection for the Access Evaluation and the MVS will focus on gathering individual-level Medicaid enrollment files and student enrollment files and learning about the matching rules used in each State and district. For the Access Evaluation, these data will cover SY 2011–2012 and will be collected in all demonstration States in summer 2012. The MVS will require data for SY 2013–2014 in three States.

Data collection for the Costs and Participation Evaluation will be conducted in SY 2012–2013 and SY 2013–2014 and will include three key components: (1) district-level school meal certification and participation files obtained from States; (2) telephone interviews with States and a web survey of districts to obtain information on costs; and (3) telephone interviews with States in both years and with districts in SY 2013–2014 to obtain information about challenges experienced in implementing DC-M.

**Disseminating the Findings**

The results of the study will be documented in a series of reports, including an Access Evaluation Report and two reports to Congress, which will be submitted in October 2014 and October 2015.

**For More Information**

For more information about the study, please contact:

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