

TO: Local District Commissioners

FROM: Donna B. Farlow, Deputy Director, Office of Medicaid Management
Patricia Stevens, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Temporary &
Disability Assistance

SUBJECT: Access To Services

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Department of Health:
Bureau of Local District Support
Upstate - (518) 474-9130; New York City - (212) 613-4330

Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance:
Temporary Assistance Team Representative at 1-800-343-8859:

Team I - 3-0332	Team IV - 4-3231
Team II - 4-9344	Team V - 3-1469
Team III - 4-9307	Team VI - (212) 383-1658

This message is to remind local social services districts of the State's policy regarding civil rights and access to Medicaid and Temporary Assistance benefits.

As set forth in the Local District Manager's Guide, introduced by 86 ADM-26, it is New York State's policy that applicants for and recipients of social services programs including Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps and Medicaid must have timely access to such benefits regardless of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin or disability.

Each social services district is required to ensure that programs are administered in a fair and humane manner, and that all staff, especially those who have direct contact with applicants and recipients on a daily basis, understand this obligation and are trained to carry out these policies.

Persons with limited fluency in English must be able to apply for benefits without undue hardship. Districts must have arrangements to provide interpretation or translation services for person who need them. Each worker should know what these arrangements are, and how to use them. Non-English speaking applicants may bring a translator of their choice with them to the social services district. However, applicants may not be required to bring their own translator, and no person can be denied access on the basis of a district's inability to provide adequate translations.

Persons with physical disabilities must have access to social services district offices. If there are barriers in the district buildings that would hinder access, alternative means of access must be available, whether these are alternate entrances and offices or alternate places for conducting interviews.