

Issue Paper

Definition of 1619(b):

Since the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program was implemented in 1974, work incentive provisions have been included in the Social Security Act for persons with severe disabilities. Under Section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act, an individual who receives SSI and goes to work can retain their Medicaid coverage even after they no longer receive SSI payments. However their earnings must remain below the threshold amount. (The current threshold amount in Virginia is \$21,319 per year).

As of June 2001, the average income in Virginia for the 1619(b) group was \$965 per month or \$11,580 per year. Presently, the 1619(b) work incentive program is an underutilized program in Virginia.

Provided below are some features of the Work Incentive program included in the Social Security Act.

Benefits

1. Simple to figure out for lower level jobs. One can earn up to \$21,319 and keep their Medicaid coverage.
2. Does not involve employer.
3. The person with a disability does not have to figure out what expenses are disability related, e.g. does not have to keep receipts, etc.

Drawbacks

1. This program serves only persons on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and very few persons on SSI know it exists.

Number of 1619(b) recipients in Virginia compared to Medicaid Status

The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) obtained a listing of ALL the 1619(b) recipients in Virginia as per the Social Security Administration. These recipients were matched to the Medicaid files to determine if the person was ever on Medicaid in Virginia, was currently on Medicaid, or was never on Medicaid in Virginia. In February 2001, the Social Security Administration reported a total of 1781 recipients were 1619(b).

1619(b) Status as of Feb. 2001		Medicaid Status
291	(16.3%) of the 1619(b) recipients	Never on Medicaid in Virginia
1,019	(57.2%) of the 1619(b) recipients	Were on Medicaid as of Feb. 2001
471	(26.5%) of the 1619(b) recipients	Were on Medicaid but cancelled as of Feb. 2001. No longer on Medicaid.
1,781	Total	

Medicaid Eligibility Issues

Of the 1,019 recipients that are 1619(b) and on Medicaid, the majority are not on Medicaid as a 1619(b) recipient but on in another covered group. DMAS has been meeting with state and regional Department of Social Services staff to determine why this is the case. The Department of Social Services and the Department of Medical Assistance Services are working together to ensure 1619(b) recipients are enrolled in Medicaid as 1619(b) to ensure the recipient is on Medicaid as a 1619(b) to ensure their protected status.