

**N. C. Division of Aging and Adult Services Administrative Letter No. 19-03**  
**Adult Services Section**

**Date:** March 8, 2019

**Subject:** Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA 2019) and VA Cost-of- Living Adjustment for Special Assistance In-Home (SA-IH) Beneficiaries.

**Distribution:** County Directors  
Special Assistance Supervisors  
Adult Services Supervisors

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2019

**I. BACKGROUND:**

Effective January 1, 2019, Special Assistance beneficiaries who receive RSDI/SSI/VA received a 2.8 percent cost-of-living increase (COLA) in their RSDI/SSI/VA benefits. SA-IH cases were exempt from counting the COLA increase until April 2019, after the publication of the new federal poverty levels.

NC FAST automatically updated SA-IH payments to be effective April 1, 2019, to reflect these changes. This letter explains the 2019 SA-IH COLA mass change actions to be taken by counties.

**II. SA-IH PENDING APPLICATIONS**

Pending applications will not be automatically updated by NC FAST. All pending applications will require RSDI/SSI/VA benefit evidence to be entered for month(s) prior to April 2019 with an end date of March 31, 2019, and the new RSDI/SSI/VA evidence with a start date of April 1, 2019.

**III. RSDI/SSI/VA PAYMENT AMOUNT CORRECTIONS**

- A. NC FAST drops cents for Social Security, SSI, and VA benefits when executing the automated COLA updates for the mass change. Should an amount be incorrect due to dropping cents for cases automatically updated by NC FAST, it is not necessary to manually correct the amounts immediately following the mass change. Take action to correct Social Security, SSI and VA payment amounts at the next recertifications or change of circumstances, whichever occurs first, by entering the increased benefit amount on Benefit/Income evidence. The start date for the corrected evidence is January 1, 2019.

When corrections are needed at the next recertification or change of circumstance and the corrected benefit amount results in an SA payment decreases, send a new timely DSS-8110 indicating the new SA payment. Note that correcting the Benefit/Income Evidence to an increased Social Security, SSI,

or VA benefit amount will create an overpayment in NC FAST. The overpayment created when adding the corrected Benefit/Income Evidence timely, (the first time the case is touched after the NC FAST COLA 2019 COLA mass change), is a state responsible overpayment and charged to the state.

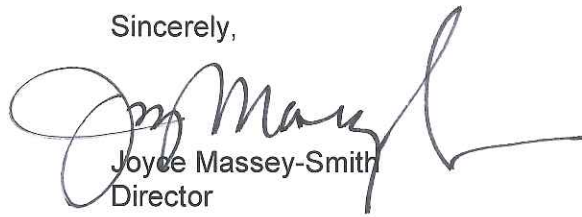
- B. SA cases not automatically updated by the NC FAST Mass Change (Exception Cases) and require county caseworker manual updating and review, should be completed prior to the April 2019 NC FAST processing deadline to avoid county responsible overpayment that require recoupment.

#### IV. NC FAST COLA COMMUNICATIONS

NC FAST will provide notification, further guidance, and reports related to COLA automation. All communication guidance and instructions must be followed timely and accurately to ensure appropriate actions are taken to avoid potential overpayments.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Special Assistance listserv at [specialassistance@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:specialassistance@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,



Joyce Massey-Smith  
Director

JMS/LH/pg