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Moderator: The slides and other related materials will be posted on our Web site, www.EnrollNow.net.

We will be sending the slides and a link to the recording to all attendees after the webinar. Now let's get started with the webinar. Our presenter today is Jeremy Pahl. Mr. Pahl is the LIHEAP Policy Supervisor for the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services in the Office of Income Maintenance through the Bureau of Policy. He has been with the Department of Human Services for six years. He has worked directly with LIHEAP for the last three years and has served in his current role as the LIHEAP Policy Supervisor.

We are very happy he could join us today to educate us on this program. And I will now turn it over to you, Jeremy.

Jeremy Pahl: Okay, good morning. Can you hear me? Is that a no? Nobody can hear me?

Moderator: Yes. Everybody is typing in the chat bar, yes.

Jeremy Pahl: Okay, great. Okay, yes. So welcome. My name is Jeremy Pahl. I work for the Department of Human Services Office of Income Maintenance. Today I'm just going to give a brief informational session about LIHEAP. I'm going to touch upon the basics, but we will have some time at the end of the presentation for any questions or if you're interested in more details about the program.

So what is LIHEAP? LIHEAP is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. LIHEAP is completely federally funded from the Department of Health and Human Services. It's a grant to all states and tribes to help low income households afford the cost of home energy. This grant is

awarded every federal fiscal year, which runs from October through September. So our program runs along a similar timeframe. As a cold weather state Pennsylvania offers heating assistance and energy efficiency improvements with this block grant. And for this current program year we've received \$178.6 million. And if we're lucky, we'll receive about 10% more.

Okay. So the majority of LIHEAP is administered by my department, Human Services, in the form of LIHEAP cash benefits and LIHEAP Crisis benefits. LIHEAP cash benefits are to reduce a household's energy costs and crisis benefits are specifically for emergencies. All of our benefits and eligibility determinations are done at our county assistance offices. We have one in each of our 67 counties.

The rest of the grant is administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development, also known as DCED. They administer the LIHEAP weatherization component, which consists of standard weatherization assistance, which helps to make homes more energy efficient and LIHEAP Crisis benefits, specifically to provide repairs and replacements of inoperative heating systems. That's also known as crisis weatherization. All those benefits are administered by 37 weatherization agencies contracted with DCED, to provide coverage across the state.

So although we're well into 2017/18, these are the final statistics from the last program year, '16/17. You could see we received over 5600,000 applications for LIHEAP cash. We were able to approve almost 350,000 of those, average cash benefits per household were \$334.00 and that also includes some supplemental benefits that we issued in the late Summer with some extra funding that we received. We took in over 115,000 applications for LIHEAP Crisis and we had over 100,000 of those were approved. The average crisis benefit for those recipient households was \$330.00. Overall for the year, we assisted 349,232 Pennsylvania households that year and so far this year, we're looking at quite similar numbers. We've already received almost 417,000 applications for LIHEAP cash and we've approved almost 290,000 of those so far.

The program here officially opened to the public on November 1st and we are scheduled to run through April 6th. Now the program close date is always subject to the availability of funds. If we have more funds available, we will sometimes extend the season. Conversely if we were to run out of funds we could potentially close early. However, we are looking pretty good to be fully funded through the extent of the scheduled program year, April 6th.

The income limits for LIHEAP cash and crisis are based off 150% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines for 2017. This chart can give you an idea of what those income limits look like for various household sizes. So what is LIHEAP cash? It's simply a once per program year benefit to help a household offset their winter heating costs. It's a grant that ranges anywhere here from \$200.00 up to \$1000. The benefit amount is based on a number of factors, primarily income as well as household size, the household's fuel type as well as the geographical region of Pennsylvania where the household resides. And in most cases that benefit is sent directly to the household's participating utility or fuel vendor.

LIHEAP Crisis - these grants are for home heating emergencies, specifically what we call supply shortage emergencies. Those are things like utility terminations, empty oil tanks and so forth, situations where a household is currently out of heat or in imminent threat of being without heat. Those benefits can range from \$25.00 to \$500.00 and they are based on the need. So whatever is needed to resolve that emergency will drive the benefit amount. The maximum \$500.00 is a seasonal limit. So a household cannot get more than \$500.00, although they can receive multiple benefits up to that amount.

And as I mentioned before, our partner agency, DCED, their agencies provide furnace repairs and replacements as needed. Households that have already applied for LIHEAP cash and have been approved, provided the household has not changed, do not need to submit a new application to apply for LIHEAP Crisis. They basically call their county assistance office.

This shows various ways that a household can apply for LIHEAP. Many households choose to apply on the Compass Web site through their computer; submit an electronic application. They can also apply for other benefits at the same time. Upon request, a household can receive an application mailed to them which they can then return. Applications are still received by fax and the simplest method still works - actually going to your county assistance office, completing an application and handing it directly to a caseworker.

And additionally a household that has already been approved for LIHEAP can request further crisis assistance by calling their local county assistance office or if they're in Luzerne or Wyoming counties, their crisis contractor. And I do want to add that the My Compass PA mobile app is available for households to check the status of applications, as well as to upload documentation using their phone's camera. And there are plans for the next season beginning next Fall, that this mobile app can be used to submit a simplified LIHEAP application. That would be for households with minimal changes; not everybody.

I'll talk a little bit about our outreach and this also ties into the mobile app because that application would be targeted to this population. Prior to the official season open generally around November 1st, we offer a preseason application period. And this is to all the households who received LIHEAP in the previous year. So they're likely to be LIHEAP eligible again. They're given a prefilled application or a Compass postcard. The application will have some of their information completed already, allowing them to apply early. Similarly, the Compass postcard gives them a registration number that they can log into Compass early, and fill out a simplified application online.

So all of these households will also have the ability to log into the mobile app and potentially complete their application through that app if they wish. There will be a small prescreening to see if they're able to do that. Here is a snip of the LIHEAP application, also known as the HSEA 1.

This remains relatively the same the past couple of years, although we did have to add a few pages of privacy information to it.

This is that Compass postcard I was talking about. So those households who have that early application opportunity, they'll receive a Compass postcard in the mail, provided they've used Compass before. This will give them some brief instructions on how to log into Compass and use their unique registration number to begin an early application. Here's a screen shot of Compass. The link that's circled and pointed to there, is the link that a household would use to enter their Compass registration number and apply early. They can also continue to use that Compass registration number after the season is open. It does provide a slightly simpler application experience, pulling in case information from our system to prepopulate the old.

I'm going to go over the application process. The first step is the application is submitted and it's reviewed to determine if it is complete. And what that means is can the application be processed? If anything else is needed to process the application it is incomplete and an incomplete notice is sent to the household requesting the verification necessary to determine eligibility.

Here is a typical verification that may be requested from the applicant - Social Security Number, proof of income most common. That could be paystubs, it could be an award letter for Social Security. We also determine heating responsibility. That is the household's responsibility to pay for heat. Verification of that could include a heating bill, either a bill from their utility company, a receipt from an oil delivery or possibly a statement from the landlord that they're responsible to pay for it. We often have to verify residence and that could be done through a copy of a lease or again a utility bill with that person's name and address would suffice.

If someone is requesting crisis, we do need to verify that situation, that emergency, such as providing a shutoff notice. If they are within 15 days of being out of oil or propane we do take

their word for it. In some cases applicants who are not citizens would have to verify their residency status. Applicants always have 15 days to provide the verification that we've asked for. In most cases, within 30 days the application will be approved or rejected. The applicant will always receive a notice explaining the eligibility decision as well as providing instructions to appeal, if necessary.

We have various routes a client can go to, to obtain more information about the program. We have a dedicated LIHEAP hotline with a staff that will answer questions about general program information. They can forward questions to the proper county assistance office. Compass also provides basic information about LIHEAP and other programs and you can use it to potentially see if you would qualify. And we also have a LIHEAP Web site as part of www.DHS.PA.gov. It has information about the program, it has applications that can be downloaded. It also has a tool to estimate benefits based on income level and location.

Because we have so many participating vendors we have a dedicated LIHEAP vendor unit and they have various resources. The vendors can use current active vendors or prospective vendors can call their hotline. They also have a mailbox and they have their own Web site. So that concludes my presentation and I'm available now for any questions that you might have.

Moderator: If you have a question, remember you can type it in the chat bar at the bottom of your screen.

Jeremy Pahl: Okay. I see a question - do all people in a household - does their income all count towards the income limit? In most cases, yes. With almost every policy there are certain exceptions, but again in almost every case everyone in the household is counted, as well as their income. There's a question - can applicants get benefits to replace a broken heating system? Yes. They can get those services provided. They can apply through their county assistance office. They'll send a referral if eligible, to the local weatherization contractor that services that area. And they

will go and evaluate the heating system, potentially repair or replace that heating system. So it's not a direct benefit, but it is a service that's provided should the household qualify.

Okay, here's another question. If it closes on April 6th does that mean a consumer can apply up to April 6th or do they need to apply 30 days before then? They can apply until close of business on April 6th. Can income from SSA be verified without sending proof of an award letter? We do have a system of data exchange with the Social Security Administration. And in most cases we can verify Social Security income with that applicant's Social Security Number. It's rarer and rarer that we actually need to get award letters for Social Security, but there are instances where we do.

Can this be printed? I assume that the PDF or the PowerPoint presentation, when available, can be printed.

Moderator: Correct. And it will be available after the meeting. All participants will receive a copy.

Jeremy Pahl: Okay. A question is, is there ever a time when someone is not in those income guidelines but a crisis is happening? For example, they make \$40,000, a family of four, but the head of the household just lost their job. The income limits do always apply, however we do look at the month prior to application. So if income has stopped sometimes depending on when they apply, if they don't - if income for that prior month is within the income limit, then they can qualify. There are not higher income guidelines for a crisis, but depending on that timeframe, it may make sense to apply the following month if they're denied one month. Because that lookback month will change with the newer application.

How is the award, \$25.00 minimum \$500.00 maximum, determined? That's based on what's needed to resolve the emergency. So if a household presents a termination notice for their natural gas and it's - \$300.00 is needed to maintain service, then provided they meet all other

conditions of eligibility, their crisis grant will be \$300.00. In some cases they may need more than \$500.00 in which case we hope - we try with a combination of both their LIHEAP cash grant as well as the Crisis grant and if necessary, any other resources available to the household; we try to combine everything, or potentially negotiate a lower amount with the utility company, to make that work.

Most furnace replacements will cost more than \$500.00. That's very true. Is this the limit on the benefit? No. Those - the \$25.00 minimum \$500.00 max is strictly related to the Crisis grant for supply shortage emergencies, terminations, fuel depletions. There is no set limit on what the cost of a furnace repair or replacement would be. Are there programs available that have higher household incomes? People who get denied LIHEAP. I do believe Dollar Energy has an income limit possibly of 250%. Don't quote me on that. That is somewhat regionally available. I don't think Dollar Energy services all regions of Pennsylvania. There are - well (PAP) programs generally have the same 150% guideline.

The protection from termination during the winter months, the moratorium does apply to households who have up to 250% of the Federal Poverty Income Guideline. So households that wouldn't qualify for LIHEAP, if they provide income verification, can at least maintain heat throughout those winter months, based on the PUC's moratorium guidelines. I'm seeing some follow up questions from (Brenda Thomason). I'm not really sure if I answered her question or not.

Here's another question. How long does the crisis process take? Generally we try to resolve those situations or at least set into motion a resolution, within 48 hours. But that does depend on whether we have the necessary verification. So if someone applies for crisis assistance and they don't provide their income verification for two weeks, then we are limited and that 48 hours will begin once we have all the verification necessary to determine eligibility. In some cases such as

utility terminations where the termination date may not be for say another 20 days, we do tend to triage our applications and try to address the ones that are more pressing.

Anybody else have any questions for me?

Moderator: Okay. Well if there are no other questions, thank you for joining us today. If you do have additional questions, please feel free to email me at (TeresaSMcDonnell)@MAXIMUS.com. Please take some time to give us your feedback by completing the webinar survey at the end of this call. Our next webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, May 15th, on SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, with the possibility of a joint presentation from TANF, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

For more information about upcoming webinars, please visit www.EnrollNow.net under meetings and news. Thank you again, for your participation, and have a great day.