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PRESS RELEASE
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DHHS Announces Early Issue of February Food Stamp Benefits

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has announced that food stamp beneficiaries will have access to their February benefits earlier than usual. February benefits will be available to eligible food stamp households beginning January 20, instead of the regular availability date of February 5th. The early availability is not an additional benefit, and beneficiaries are encouraged to plan their purchases carefully.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides food stamps to more than 40,000 New Hampshire families. SNAP funding expired on December 21st, but the USDA is taking advantage of a provision in the expired legislation that allows SNAP to be funded for an additional 30 days.

In anticipation of the January 20th deadline, some 200 DHHS employees worked throughout this past weekend to process applications and redeterminations submitted by thousands of beneficiaries. DHHS staff contacted beneficiaries to advise them of the early issuance of February food stamp benefits and encouraged them to submit their requests as quickly as possible. Staff also conducted interviews with beneficiaries who were scheduled for interviews at a district office in the coming weeks, to complete administrative requirements as soon as possible to ensure those beneficiaries receive their SNAP benefits without interruption.

“Our state employees have done remarkable work in a short amount of time to ensure that the impact of the partial federal government shut down on New Hampshire is as minimal as possible,” said Governor Chris Sununu. “Their efforts will ensure those who rely on the SNAP program will have access to those services through February. My administration will continue to do everything we can to help minimize as much as possible the impact the dysfunction of Washington has on New Hampshire.”

“Payments will be disbursed on January 20th but it is critical for recipients to understand that this is their February allotment and not a supplemental payment so they must budget accordingly,” said DHHS Commissioner Jeffrey A. Meyers. “The USDA has identified a way to make funding available to continue the SNAP program in February, and SNAP is important to ensuring the nutritional needs of beneficiaries and their families are met. We will continue to communicate with USDA to learn more about the continued availability of SNAP benefits after February.”

Beneficiaries due for recertification of benefits in January have been made aware that the deadline for submitting documentation is January 15th. DHHS is making every effort to process documents that are received after this date in order to minimize disruption to SNAP

beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries with specific questions about their cases should contact DHHS at 1-800-852-3345, ext. 9700.

Beneficiaries may take advantage of local food pantries for additional support as needed. For a complete listing of area food pantries, please visit the New Hampshire Food Bank at www.nhfoodbank.org/need-food/agency-list/.

For more information on SNAP, visit www.dhhs.nh.gov/dfa/foodstamps/.

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