
CalFresh Handbook 63-05.33 :.

CalFresh Medical Deductions for the Elderly/Disabled

Revised Date: **September 20, 2017**
Effective Date: **October 1, 2017**
Published By: **E103**

I. Summary:

This Handbook discusses the Medical deductions available for elderly and disabled recipients of CalFresh benefits. Reviewing elderly/disabled households for medical deductions allows more households to receive CalFresh benefits, and increases the benefit level available to these households.

- This handbook has been updated to include the new Standard Medical Deduction for elderly and disabled CalFresh households

II. General:

Households that have at least one elderly or disabled member are NOT subject to the gross income test.

They are still subject to the net income test. Allowing the households their eligible deductions ensures we are correctly determining both eligibility and benefit allotments. Medical deductions can be allowed to any household that has an elderly or disabled member. Elderly persons are age 60 and over. To be considered disabled in CalFresh, the individual must meet the Social Security Administration Act definition.

Most households that have an elderly or disabled member in their home will have out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Effective October 1, 2017 Households with verified medical expenses within the range of \$35.00 to \$155.00 will receive a \$120 standard medical deduction (SMD).

Households with medical expenses above \$155.00 may receive actual deductions if they are able to verify the expense.

If a household claims medical expenses above \$155.00 a month but does not provide verification of expenses above \$155.00 per month that household may receive the SMD based on verified expenses that are between \$35.00 to \$155.00.

The Eligibility Services Technician (EST) shall document all medical expenses reported by the household, at both intake and recertification, regardless of the dollar (\$) amount. Since many of the allowable medical items/supplies may not be purchased on a monthly basis, the anticipated or paid costs may be averaged over the certification period.

III. Allowable Medical Expenses

Allowable deductions include, but are not limited to:

- Medical and dental care including psychotherapy and rehabilitation services;
- Hospitalization or outpatient treatment, nursing care and nursing home care;
- Prescription drugs and the cost of postage and handling for medication received through the mail
(**NOTE:** Medical marijuana is **not** an allowable expense, regardless of a doctor's prescription);
- Over the counter medicines, supplies, and equipment that are **prescribed** by a licensed practitioner;
- Health and hospitalization insurance policy premiums, including Medicare premiums;
- Any share of cost that is expected to be spent down by Medi-Cal recipients;
- Eyeglasses or contact lenses prescribed by a physician or optometrist;
- Dentures, hearing aids and prosthetics;
- Actual cost of transportation to medical appointments, pharmacies, etc.;
 - The actual cost of transportation is an allowable medical cost provided that it is less than the actual cost of the least expensive mode of transportation reasonably available to the recipient. (i.e. public transportation)
 - When a more costly means of transportation, such as a taxi or private auto is the only means available, the actual costs of such transportation shall be allowed.
 - Calculated by multiplying the number of round trip miles by the federal mileage reimbursement rate (current reimbursement rates can be found at [IRS Standard Mileage Rate](#))
 - The ESTs may use MapQuest or Google Maps to determine mileage between locations.
- Cost for maintaining an attendant, home health [aide](#), or child care services necessary for age/illness; and,
- Cost of securing and maintaining service animals, such as seeing/hearing dogs.

When the household has a reported an actual or anticipated medical expense, the information will be recorded on the application and in CalWIN *Case Comments*. The Eligibility Services Technician (EST) will also request verification of the costs from the household.

When the household does not have actual proof of the cost of the expense(s), due to loss, misplaced documents or receipts that were not requested when paid, a sworn statement can be used. The [CF 31, Supplemental Form for Special Medical Deductions](#) is an optional but recommended form for clients to document their medical expenses.

CalWIN will only allow medical expenses [when](#) the *Collect Medical Expense Detail* window is documented with the cost(s).

TIPs:

- Having the form [CF31](#) available for the customer to view, helps the household remember of out-of-pocket medical expenses they may not otherwise think of.
- Remind the customer to think of items or services they anticipate paying for in the next 12-[36](#) months. There is no overissuance if the anticipated expense is not actually paid for during the certification period.
- If the customer is wearing eyeglasses or a hearing aid, ask them about that expense.

IV. Certifications:

If **all adult** household members are elderly and/or disabled (even if children are in the household), the household may be certified for up to [36](#) months.

Elderly/disabled households given [up to a 36](#) month certification period should be asked about medical expenses at the time of the interview (in office or telephone). The EST should identify the various types of medical expenses that can be allowed as a deduction, and that these can be for expenses the household is currently paying or costs they expect to have during the certification period. The EST should inform the household that medical deductions may allow them more CalFresh benefits.

Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) Households:

CalFresh applicants and recipients are eligible for the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) program if **all** household members are elderly (age 60 or older) and/or disabled and have **no earned income**. While ESAP households can report and verify medical expenses in excess of \$35 in order to receive a deduction, the SAR 7 will be used to attest to the household's circumstances and report any changes at **12 months** and **24 months**.

Reminder: ESAP households no longer need to complete recertification interviews unless the case has been denied and will have a recertification period of 36 months.

For more information on ESAP households please see [CalFresh Handbook 63-04.02](#).

EXAMPLE:

A 65 year old woman and her 16 year old grandchild are applying [CalFresh](#). She did not report any medical deductions on her application. When interviewing the customer, the EST informs her of the available medical deductions. She states that she:

1. Buys eyeglasses at least once every two years which costs \$125.00;
2. Has an \$85 monthly Medicare premium deducted from her Social Security income;
3. Spends approximately \$25.00 every 3 months for over-the-counter inhalers, aspirin, etc., that her doctor prescribed; and
4. [Travels 120 miles round trip each month](#) driving to her doctor appointments and the pharmacy [as there are no bus stops near her home](#)

Monthly Average deductions:

Glasses, \$125 / 24 months = \$5.20 per month

Medicare premium = \$85 per month

Over-the-counter medicines, \$25 x 4 = \$100 / 12 = \$8.33 per month

Travel expenses, \$20.40 per month ($120 * 0.17 = \20.40 with 17 cents/mile being the 2017 IRS mileage reimbursement rate)

Total monthly medical expenses = \$118.93.

Enter all costs into CalWIN, and CalWIN will allow her the standard medical deduction of \$120.

References:

MPP 63-102(e) and 63-502.331

[ACL 14-106E](#)

[ACL 17-34](#)

[ACL 17-35](#)