

in HHS programs authorizing the award of mandatory grants:

(1) Disallowances under Titles I, IV, VI, X, XIV, XVI(AABD), XIX, and XX of the Social Security Act, including penalty disallowances such as those under sections 403(g) and 1903(g) of the Act and fiscal disallowances based on quality control samples.

(2) Disallowances in mandatory grant programs administered by the Public Health Service, including Title V of the Social Security Act.

(3) Disallowances in the programs under sections 113 and 132 of the Developmental Disabilities Act.

(4) Disallowances under Title III of the Older American Act.

(5) Decisions relating to repayment and withholding under block grant programs as provided in 45 CFR 96.52.

(6) Decisions relating to repayment and withholding under State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants as provided in 45 CFR 402.24 and 402.25.

(b) In some of these disputes, there is an option for review by the head of the granting agency prior to appeal to the Board. Where an appellant has requested review by the agency head first, the "final written decision" required by §16.3 for purposes of Board review will generally be the agency head's decision affirming the disallowance. If the agency head declines to review the disallowance or if the appellant withdraws its request for review by the agency head, the original disallowance decision is the "final written decision." In the latter cases, the 30-day period for submitting a notice of appeal begins with the date of receipt of the notice declining review or with the date of the withdrawal letter.

*C. Direct, discretionary project programs.*

(a) The Board reviews the following types of final written decisions in disputes arising in any HHS program authorizing the award of direct, discretionary project grants or cooperative agreements:

(1) A disallowance or other determination denying payment of an amount claimed under an award, or requiring return or set-off of funds already received. This does not apply to determinations of award amount or disposition of unobligated balances, or selection in the award document of an option for disposition of program-related income.

(2) A termination for failure to comply with the terms of an award.

(3) A denial of a noncompeting continuation award under the project period system of funding where the denial is for failure to comply with the terms of a previous award.

(4) A voiding (a decision that an award is invalid because it was not authorized by statute or regulation or because it was fraudulently obtained).

(b) Where an HHS component uses a preliminary appeal process (for example, the

Public Health Service), the "final written decision" for purposes of Board review is the decision issued as a result of that process.

*D. Cost allocation and rate disputes.*

The Board reviews final written decisions in disputes which may affect a number of HHS programs because they involve cost allocation plans or rate determinations. These include decisions related to cost allocation plans negotiated with State or local governments and negotiated rates such as indirect cost rates, fringe benefit rates, computer rates, research patient care rates, and other special rates.

*E. SSI agreement disputes.*

The Board reviews disputes in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program arising under agreements for Federal administration of State supplementary payments under section 1616 of the Social Security Act or mandatory minimum supplements under section 212 of Pub. L. 93-66. In these cases, the Board provides an opportunity to be heard and offer evidence at the Secretarial level of review as set out in the applicable agreements. Thus, the "final written decision" for purposes of Board review is that determination appealable to the Secretary under the agreement.

*F. Where Board review is not available.*

The Board will not review a decision if a hearing under 5 U.S.C. 554 is required by statute, if the basis of the decision is a violation of applicable civil rights or non-discrimination laws or regulations (for example, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act), or if some other hearing process is established pursuant to statute.

*G. How the Board determines whether it will review a case.*

Under §16.7, the Board Chair determines whether an appeal meets the requirements of this Appendix. If the Chair finds that there is some question about this, the Board will request the written opinion of the HHS component which issued the decision. Unless the Chair determines that the opinion is clearly erroneous, the Board will be bound by the opinion. If the HHS component does not respond within a time set by the Chair, or cannot determine whether the Board clearly does or does not have jurisdiction, the Board will take the appeal.

[46 FR 43817, Aug. 31, 1981, as amended at 47 FR 29492, July 6, 1982; 53 FR 7864, Mar. 10, 1988; 62 FR 38218, July 17, 1997]

**PART 17—RELEASE OF ADVERSE INFORMATION TO NEWS MEDIA**

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301.

SOURCE: 41 FR 3, Jan. 2, 1976, unless otherwise noted.

### § 17.1 Definition.

Adverse information released by an agency means any statement or release by the Department or any principal operating component made to the news media inviting public attention to an action or a finding by the Department or principal operating component of the Department which may adversely affect persons or organizations identified therein. This part does not apply to nor is it affected by any disclosure of records to the public in response to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (Pub. L. 90-23). The criteria for such disclosures are set forth in the Department's Public Information Regulation (45 CFR Part 5).

### § 17.2 Basic policy.

All adverse information release to news media shall be factual in content and accurate in description. Disparaging terminology not essential to the content and purpose of the publicity shall be avoided.

### § 17.3 Precautions to be taken.

The issuing organization shall take reasonable precautions to assure that information released is accurate and that its release fulfills an authorized purpose.

### § 17.4 Regulatory investigations and trial-type proceedings.

Adverse information relating to regulatory investigations of specifically identified persons or organizations or to pending agency trial-type proceedings shall be released only in limited circumstances in accordance with the criteria outlined below:

(a) Where the Department or a principal operating component determines that there is a significant risk that the public health or safety may be impaired or substantial economic harm may occur unless the public is notified immediately, it may release informa-

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tion to news media as one of the means of notifying the affected public speedily and accurately. However, where the Department or principal operating component determines that public harm can be avoided by immediate discontinuance of an offending practice, a respondent shall be allowed an opportunity, where feasible, to cease the practice (pending a legal test) in lieu of release of adverse information by the agency.

(b) Where it is required in order to bring notice of pending agency adjudication to persons likely to desire to participate therein or likely to be affected by that or a related adjudication, the Department or principal operating component shall rely on the news media to the extent necessary to provide such notice even though it may be adverse to a respondent.

### § 17.5 Context to be reflected.

The authority for and the character of the information shall be made clear, where appropriate, the release shall explain the nature of any studies performed, the sources of relevant data, the areas in which administrative findings of fact were made, and whether the information is based on allegations subject to subsequent adjudication.

### § 17.6 Advance notice.

Any respondent or prospective respondent in an agency proceeding shall, if practicable and consistent with the nature of the proceeding, be given advance notice of information to be released about the proceeding and a reasonable opportunity to prepare in advance a response to the information released.

### § 17.7 Retractions or corrections.

Where the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs finds that information released by the Department was misleading or a misstatement of fact and any person named therein requests a retraction or correction, the Department shall issue a retraction or correction in the same manner to all of the media outlets that received the original information (or as many of them as is feasible). Where information shown to be misleading or misstatement of fact has been released by a principal