

DAN B. FRANKEL, MEMBER
23RD LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

□ 2345 MURRAY AVENUE, SUITE 205
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15217
(412) 422-1774
FAX: (412) 420-2011

□ 332 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
P.O. BOX 202023
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2023
(717) 705-1875
FAX: (717) 705-2034

CHAIRMAN,
HEALTH COMMITTEE



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG



March 29th, 2021

Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC)
333 Market St.,
14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Re: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking -Definitions and Redetermination Regulations – OIM 14-550

Dear IRRC Commissioners,

As Democratic Chairman of the House Health Committee with oversight duties, I write in support of proposed rulemaking ‘Regulation #14-550: Definitions and Redetermination’ regarding the interview process for applicants and recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The proposed regulation to remove the face-to-face requirement for TANF applications and redeterminations will greatly improve a family’s ability to receive and continue receiving vital assistance. Currently, applicants are forced to pay for childcare, transportation, or take off work to participate in the interview face-to-face. Allowing applicants and recipients to complete this process either through phone, in-person, or other means approved by the Department will increase the program’s flexibility and accessibility by meeting individuals where they are. Removing the in-person requirement is especially important for people with disabilities, illnesses, or other challenges who are even more limited in their ability to travel to a County Assistance Office.

Allowing phone interviews is common and efficient, considering most of Pennsylvania’s surrounding states already do this without any negative consequences. It is far easier for both applicants and case workers to conduct the interview by phone, and it prevents the applicant from losing the service for purely a technical reason. We’ve witnessed the success telecommunications has with connecting individuals to support during the current public health emergency, and we should continue revising regulations that allow these successes to continue.

The TANF program is there to provide crucial help to those who need it most, and we should make that as accessible as possible. For the reasons listed above, I strongly support the proposed regulation that eases the burden on applying for assistance.

Very Truly Yours,

Dan B. Frankel, Chairman
Democratic House Health Committee