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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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## **Michigan issuing March and April food assistance benefits early**

**LANSING, Mich.** – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will issue March and April food assistance benefits early to reduce the gap between benefits payments that resulted from the partial federal government shutdown.

Food assistance recipients can expect to receive next month's benefits on March 3, 4 or 5. April benefits will be issued from April 3-12 and May payments will be issued as regularly scheduled.

MDHHS made changes to the schedule so that families do not have to go more than 45 days without receiving food assistance. The department issued February benefits early beginning on Jan. 17 at the direction of the federal government, which said there were questions about whether the funds would be available to issue in February because of the government shutdown that has since ended.

In Michigan, food assistance benefits are usually issued to clients according to a numeric schedule over a 21-day period throughout the month. About 1.2 million Michiganders receive food assistance through the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program administered by MDHHS.

"MDHHS wants to make sure that families and individuals can put food on their tables," said Terrence Beurer, MDHHS deputy director of Field Operations Administration. "We were concerned about families having to go 45 to 60 days or more without benefits as a result of the early issuance of February benefits. Gradually returning to the regular schedule cushions the impact of the federal government shutdown."

People who receive food assistance can check their benefits balance via the telephone number or website address on the back of their Bridge Card, or by accessing their account at [www.michigan.gov/mibridges](http://www.michigan.gov/mibridges).

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