



Rhode Island Department of Human Services
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March 18, 2019

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
101 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period February 16, 2018 – March 15, 2019. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/Call Center summary;
- CCAP off-cycle payments; and
- LTSS interim payments.

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve and your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHAWKINS", written in a cursive style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



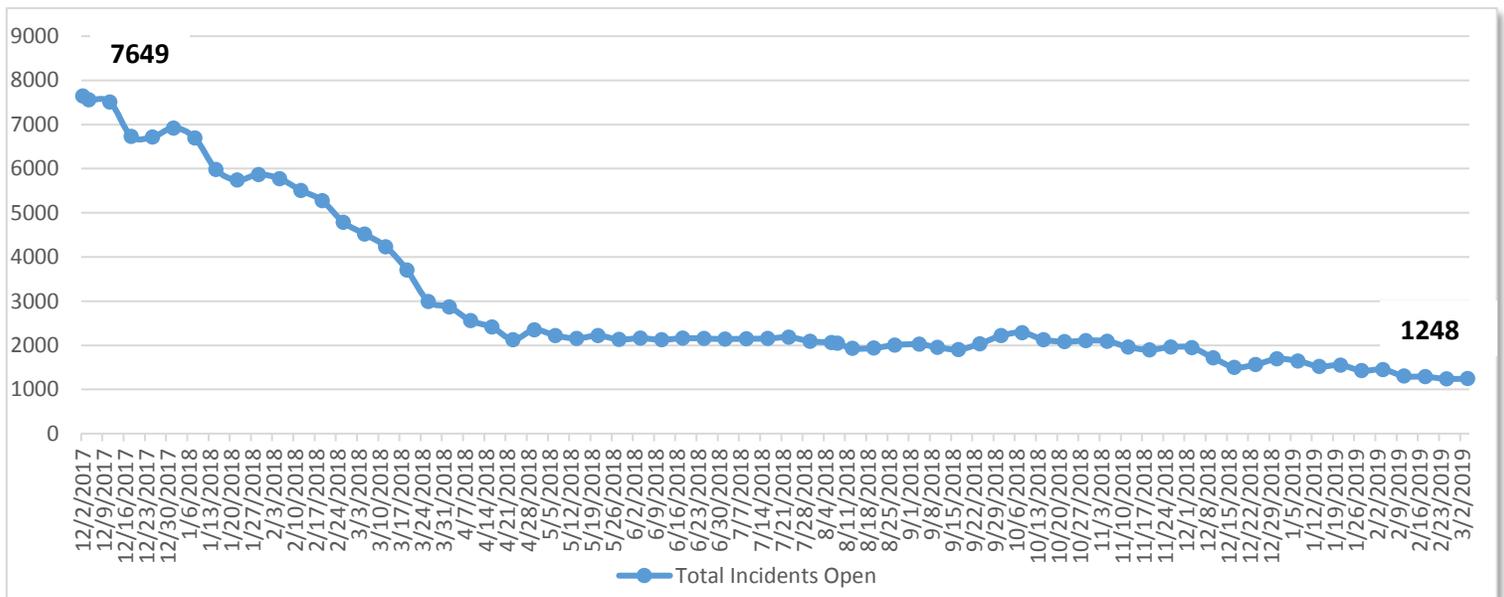
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

March 2019

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life, and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of work on RIBridges is an important part of the equation. With significant improvements to system stabilization under our belt, we are looking ahead to refocus our efforts on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS client, worker or provider) has decreased by 6,401 incidents. As of March 4, 2019, open incidents totaled 1,248 – an 84% drop since December 2017.



DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

Hiring Update

The Department of Human Services (DHS) continues to make progress in strengthening its workforce. Since February, DHS hired fourteen employees, all who have started in their new roles. The positions are:

- Seven Eligibility Technicians
- Two Employment and Career Advisors
- One Senior Case Work Supervisor dedicated to Long Term Services and Supports
- One Productivity Project Director dedicated to the Office of Performance Analytics and Continuous Improvement.
- One Chief Program Development dedicated to the Low-Income Housing and Energy Assistance Program.
- One Data Analyst dedicated to Child Care
- One Assistant Administrator dedicated to the Policy Unit

Training Overview:

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
New Hire Orientation	3/5/19 – 3/7/19	12	8	0
SNAP Training	3/18/19 – 3/20/19 & 3/11/19 – 3/15/19	48	5	6
Care Type Training	2/14/19	6	0	11
Customer Service Aid Training	2/20/19 – 2/21/19	12	0	1
RIW Training (ECA)	2/25/19 – 2/28/19	24	0	10
Time Management	2/12/19	6	0	10
Wellness Training	3/15/19	6	0	14
Medical Training	3/11/19 – 3/15/19	30	0	18
Totals		144	13	70

New Hire Orientation

- This period DHS held one new hire orientation session. A total of eight new staff members attended the training.

Current Staff Overview

- Over the last month, staff members were offered training in two program areas: Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medical Assistance (MA). In addition, specialized training was conducted for staff from the Long-Term Support Services (LTSS) unit and for Customer Service Aides. In addition, foundational training was provided to all staff in time management and wellness.

Workshop Descriptions:

New Hire Orientation: The New Employee Orientation (NEO) program is the first step in welcoming new hires to DHS. Its main objective is to familiarize new employees with the organization, the organizational structure, and our policies and procedures.

Care Type (LTSS Training): LTSS caseworkers and ETs receive a three-hour case-based scenario training on the use of the LTSS Care Type Flowchart. The flowchart that the CSDL trainer has developed is a tool that helps workers make appropriate referrals based on customer input. This training reinforces concepts learned in basic LTSS training and provides the trainees with guidance on how to identify potential LTSS care options for applicants. This training also provides referral resources for DHS LTSS staff.

SNAP: The SNAP Workshop is designed to introduce new Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policy and RIBridges. The workshop approach combines instructor led portions, demonstrations, and hands on exercises to provide a complete integrated policy and system learning experience.

Time Management: To be successful in a non-stop work environment with multiple pressures, managers need to be able to evaluate and balance priorities, be realistic with their time and communicate their priorities to others. In this module, participants learn the fundamentals of managing their own time, managing priorities, and juggling the needs of their teams.

Not only do they need to manage their time, but they need to manage time and projects of the team, therefore they learn basic project management planning as well as meeting management. Finally, it is important for managers to learn mindful stress management techniques, given the constant workflow. By effectively managing time, priorities and projects, managers “role model” priority management to their teams. This results in higher morale, increased productivity and retention improvement.

Learning objectives include:

- Reviewing time management principles
- Learning project and meeting management techniques
- Understanding mindfulness techniques to relieve stress
- Applying time management tools to their teams

Medical Training (section descriptions)

Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI): This four-day training is designed for DHS Eligibility Technicians, Senior Eligibility Technicians, and Supervising Eligibility Technicians. The course will consist of training about Medicaid policy, EOHHS policy, the Affordable Care Act, MAGI and household composition and requirements. In addition, participants will work on exercises within the RIBridges training environment and will practice registering applications, complete a MAGI Medicaid intake, run and authorize eligibility, gain understanding of interfaces in RIBridges, and understand correspondence.

Elderly Aged Disabled (EAD): This Complex Medical Workshop is designed to build capacity related to the next level of medical program eligibility after MAGI. It covers Medicaid eligibility for medically needy individuals including resource reduction, FLEX spend down, and Medicare Premium Payment (MPP) assistance for seniors. The workshop approach combines instructor led portions, demonstrations, and hands on exercises to provide a complete integrated policy and system learning experience.

Specialized: Provides system-based training for processing Non-MAGI Specialized Medical Assistance (MA) applications that are processed through the DHS Flow in RIBridges. Reinforces key concepts related to system navigation and best practices. Learning objectives include:

- ✓ Processing Sherlock applications
- ✓ Processing Medicare Premium Payment (MPP) applications
- ✓ Processing FLEX spend down applications
- ✓ Processing Katie Beckett applications
- ✓ Completing intake/data Collection
- ✓ Running eligibility and authorizing benefits

Wellness Training:

“One hour of mindful meditation”

In our busy, “automatic pilot” lives, we may find that we crave opportunities to be mindful. In this program, participants will examine the focus of mindful meditation, define it, explore what it is and isn’t, identify its benefits, discuss data that supports mindful meditation and have an opportunity to experience it.

Program highlights:

- Relaxation
- Mindfulness

- Meditation
- Letting go
- Experiential activities

“One hour of relaxation”

In this introductory meditation workshop, we will use guided imagery and breathing to learn how relaxation techniques make you even more productive during the day and help you sleep better at night.

Program highlights:

- The Buy-In
- Relaxation Techniques
- Step-by- Step
- Deep breathing

PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

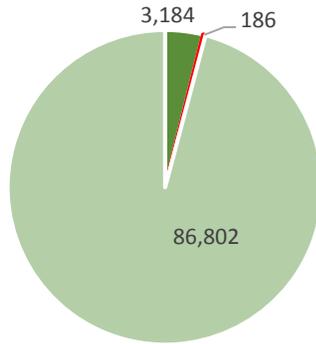
The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of March 14, 2019, the number of pending new applications across all programs was 4,970. Overdue pending applications awaiting State action totaled 2,105.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Exp	2	12	16	3	6	9	25
SNAP Non	333	127	460	7	6	13	473
CCAP	44	54	98	8	15	23	121
GPA Burial	0	1	1	0	30	30	31
SSP	0	29	29	0	22	22	51
GPA	58	16	74	100	35	135	209
RIW	107	76	183	25	63	88	271
Undet. Med	23	317	340	68	484	552	892
MAGI	27	36	63	75	111	186	249
MPP	6	36	42	6	49	55	97
Complex Med.	28	57	85	35	333	368	453
LTSS	41	986	1,027	120	951	1,071	2,098
Totals	669	1,749	2,418	447	2,105	2,552	4,970

*Undetermined Cash no longer needs to be tracked. Those numbers are now included in other program numbers.

SNAP TIMELINESS CHANGE TO MARCH NUMBERS

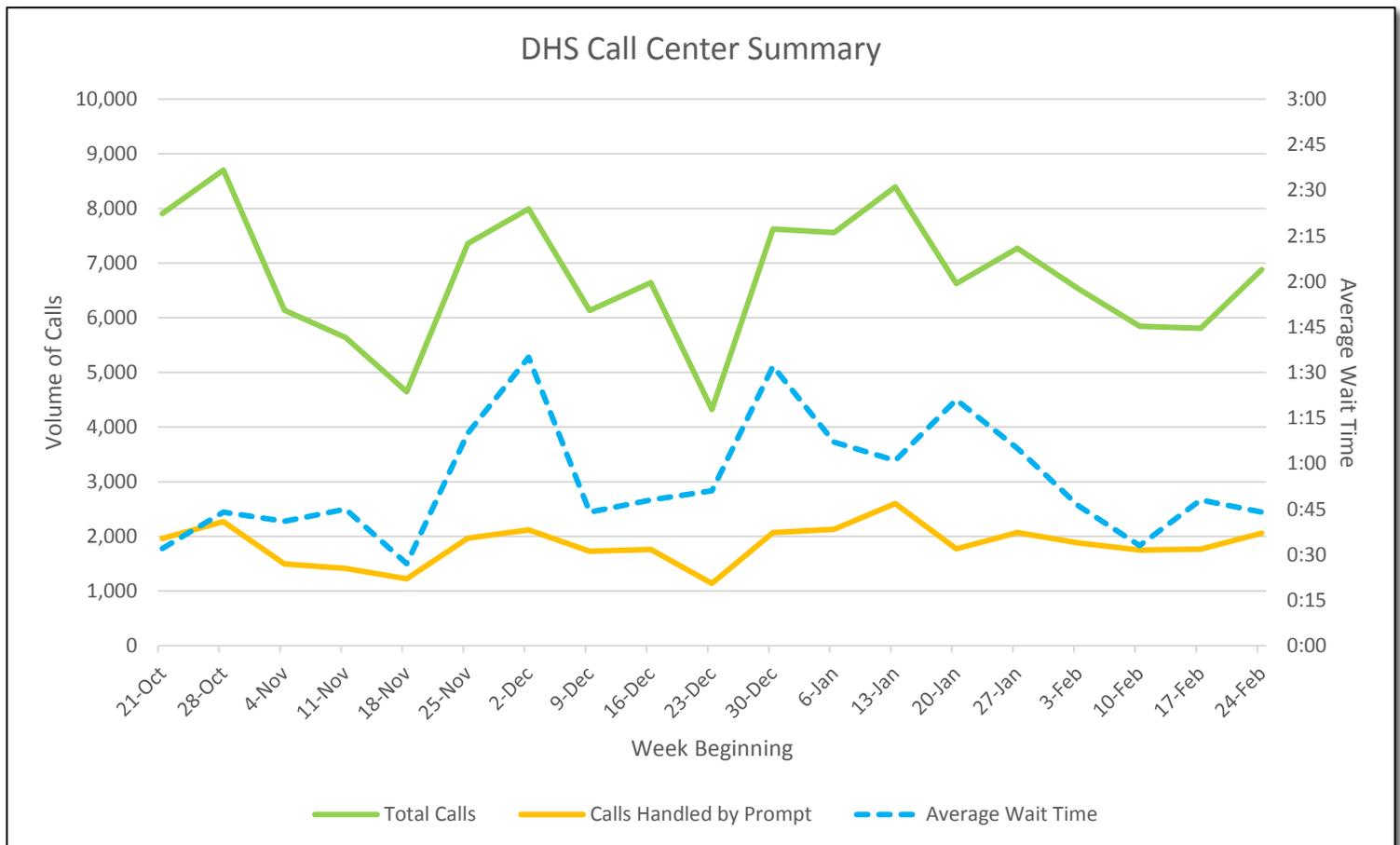
DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. The timeliness for SNAP applications was 96.2 percent for expedited and 97.4 percent for non-expedited for February 2019. SNAP timeliness was 56 percent in November 2017. We have achieved more than 90 percent timeliness since April 2018.



In February 2019, SNAP benefits were issued timely to more than 86,000 households. The number of applications not processed timely represents less than 1 percent of our SNAP population.

Untimely December Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

Despite an increase in calls, average wait times were just under 45 minutes during the last week of February 2019.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers since the week of November 15, 2018.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
18	02/14/2019	702	\$2,813,676
18A	02/15/2019	39	\$25,589
18B	02/21/2019	68	\$24,059
19	02/26/2019	695	\$2,847,718
19A	02/28/2019	35	\$61,492
19B	03/07/2019	359	\$5,547

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (18, 18A, 18B)	809	\$2,863,324
Off-cycle (18A & 18B)	107	\$49,649
Provider off-cycle/total	13.22%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	1.73%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (19 & 19A)	1089	\$2,914,757
Off-cycle (19A)	394	\$67,040
Providers off-cycle/total	36.18%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.30%	-

- Batch 19B is the off-cycle batch which is only going to comprise of the retroactive 2.5% pay increase for the dates 1/1/19-1/5/19 for Family Home & Licensed Exempt providers.
- Batch 18B was the last of the scheduled reconciliation payments.
- The batch 18A & 19A payments are for actual Bridges payment issues.

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 986 overdue LTSS applications pending state action.

Through the contingency payment process, which ensures nursing and assisted-living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, the State has paid out \$18,083,323 in interim payments to facilities for the state fiscal year 2019 (schedule is attached). Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing as we continue to meet with long term care facilities across the state. In total, the state has paid \$132,847,471. Of that dollar amount, we have collected \$20,005,270 in reconciliation payments so far. Please see related attachment labeled "NH Sheet March," which contains a summary of escalation applications reviewed during this submission's reporting period.

UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RI Bridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS AND SPECIAL MASTER

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to meet regularly to review progress on RIBridges. Below is a list of federal correspondence during this reporting period:

- March 6, 2019: Special Master's 16th report to the courts
- March 15, 2019: February 2019 SNAP Application Timeliness report as part of Gemmell agreement