



Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
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May 15, 2018

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 update on the RI Bridges system – for the period April 16, 2018 – May 14, 2018. This document covers the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- New application backlog;
- SNAP timeliness;
- CCAP off-cycle payments;
- And LTSS interim payments.

Per the Committee's request, we've also included formal correspondence between the State and its federal partners during this period – as well as background on the State's contract with Automated Health Systems.

We take our charge seriously in promoting health, protecting children, and nurturing people's quality of life. Our work on RI Bridges is an important part of the equation, and it is a means to these greater ends. Over the last year, we've strengthened our leadership in protecting access to healthcare, and we've made important gains in addressing the social determinants of health, such as food security.

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

Sincerely,

Eric J. Beane, Secretary



RI Bridges: Monthly Update

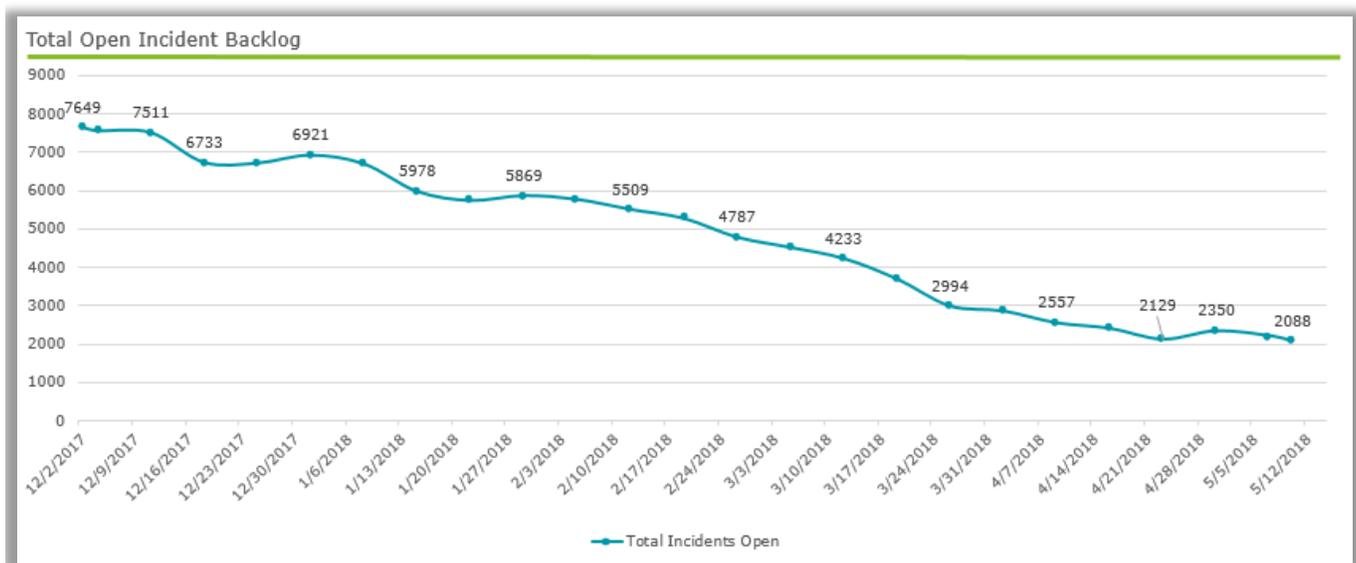
May 2018

The Executive Office of Health & Human Services coordinates and supports the delivery of programs and services across Rhode Island's health and human service agencies. 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 RI Bridges is an important part of the equation. We are not yet where we need to be with RI Bridges, but progress is being made. We have enhanced the system, improved its usability, and reduced overall defects. As we move along, we will continue to put the pieces in place to ensure the system is fully compliant and operational and that we have a strong workforce and management structure behind it. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Since the initial Turnaround phase, our top priority has been ensuring people have access to benefits. We've made considerable progress: the overall backlog is down, timeliness is up, and more work is being performed in the system. The attention is now turning to the more discrete, intricate work of ensuring the system meets all federal regulations.

As mentioned last month, an important measure of system health and stability is the total number of incidents logged related to the RI Bridges system. An incident accounts for any concern experienced in the system that needs to be investigated and, as needed, resolved. IT systems generally require updates and enhancements during their useful life, so an incident number will never hit zero. However, the incident count in RI Bridges should gradually decline over time as the system is stabilized. The number of new and existing incidents logged into RI Bridges has been declining steadily over the last several months. As of last week, open incidents totaled 2,088 – a 73 percent drop since December 2017.



Last month, RI Bridges underwent a major system upgrade – known as a “release.” This release included updating four system portals and nearly 20,000 lines of code. Below are a few highlights from the April 2018 release:



- Fixed several Qualified Health Plan (QHP) issues that were delaying the delivery of benefits and impacting workers' ability to process cases;
- Extended the length of time families can receive Transitional Medicaid from 4 months to up to 12 months;
- Enabled SNAP recipients to self-attest expenses and apply unpaid overdue medical bills towards their benefit calculations; and
- Improved the accuracy of the Master Client Index, reducing the potential for duplicates in the database.

DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

The Department of Human Services (DHS) continues to make progress in strengthening its workforce. Since last month, DHS held 17 days of training, totaling over 100 hours, for 250 employees and is working to integrate policy, system, and process training. Another 77 employees participated in learning labs, in which employees across most career tracks – from customer service aides to supervisors – receive hands-on training and increase their proficiency in the RI Bridges system.

Other highlights over the last month include:

- The Assistant Director of Child Care started on May 1.
- 18 customer service aides have been hired.
- 10 social caseworkers are in the hiring process, with one joining the Department this month.
- A new quality control reviewer will join DHS in June.

The Department continues to focus on filling customer service aide and social case worker positions to support timely scanning and indexing of applications - as well as to work LTSS cases.

NEW APPLICATION BACKLOG

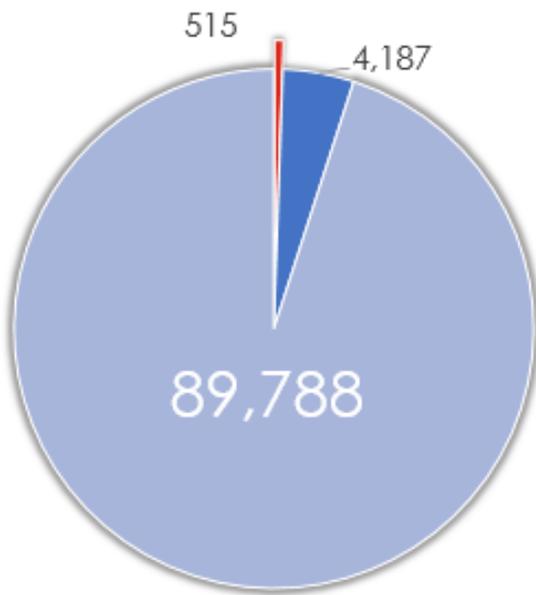
A continued focus on system improvements and strengthening the DHS workforce has led to sharp reductions in the backlog of new applications. There are currently 5,239 pending applications.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Exp	25	14	39	29	5	34	73
SNAP Non	452	68	520	118	6	124	644
CCAP	39	134	173	13	49	62	235
GPA Burial	1	5	6	2	12	14	20
SSP	0	7	7	0	17	17	24
GPA	64	32	96	121	39	160	256
RIW	155	79	234	40	39	79	313
Undet. Cash	6	2	8	54	17	71	79
Undet. Med	6	138	144	60	307	367	511
MAGI	81	82	163	341	311	652	815
MPP	8	142	150	50	151	201	351
Complex Med.	30	88	118	77	294	371	489
LTSS	6	827	833	32	564	596	1,429
Totals	873	1,618	2,491	937	1811	2,748	5,239



The State continues to prioritize the overall number of aging cases in the system that are awaiting State action. SNAP applications, in particular, have been a significant focus – with only 11 applications currently overdue.

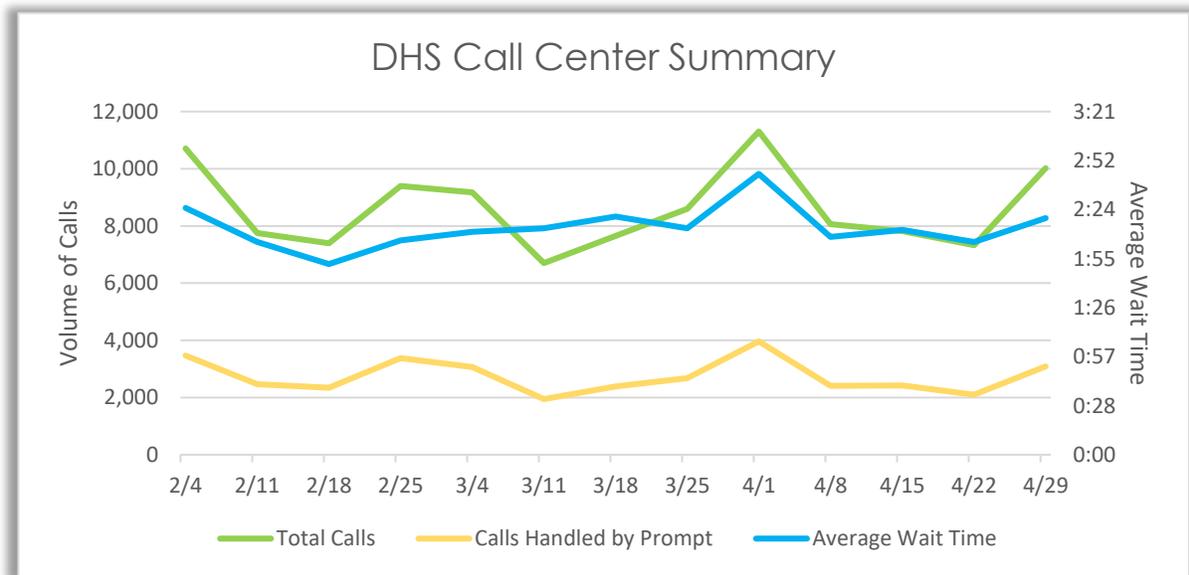
SNAP TIMELINESS + CALL CENTER SUMMARY



SNAP timeliness has markedly improved through investments in people, process and technology. The State has doubled the number of cases worked per worker, per day and has achieved a combined SNAP timeliness rate of 90.2 percent for April – up from 83 percent in March. During the most challenging months, Rhode Island was among the worst in the nation for timeliness. The state is now performing better than roughly one-third of states nationally.

In April, SNAP benefits were issued to nearly 90,000 households, and 4,187 new applications were processed timely. While the number of applications not processed timely, 515, represents just one percent of the total SNAP population, the State remains focused on improving its timeliness rate.

Untimely March Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

We worked with child care providers to design and implement a “Summer Flip” functionality, to streamline summer camp enrollment. Last month, 615 child care providers received payment through direct deposit. On average, 45 percent of providers are submitting attendance online.



	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (22, 22A, 22B)	746	\$2.7 million
Off-Cycle (22A, 22B)	54	\$94,053
Providers Off-Cycle/Total	7.24%	N/A
Payments Off-Cycle/Total	3.44%	N/A
	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (23, 23A, 23B)	742	\$2.7 million
Off-Cycle (23A, 23B)	55	\$166,168
Providers Off-Cycle/Total	7.41%	N/A
Payments Off-Cycle/Total	6.08%	N/A

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

The State continues to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications, as we work with nursing homes to ensure all outstanding cases are identified and resolved. As of May 8, Deloitte reports there were 378 overdue applications – down from 1,259 applications aged over 90 days in March.

Given the historical and system challenges with LTSS, we established a contingency payment process to ensure nursing and assisted-living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, as work continues to drive down the backlog. Interim payments made during this reporting period total \$3,823,926 (schedule attached).

The payment reconciliation process is ongoing. We are working closely with nursing homes and assisted-living facilities to match interim payments with claims paid in MMIS that have the same dates of service. The State’s Medicaid team is in regular communication with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on strategies to address the eligibility backlog and payment reconciliation processes.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

CMS and the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to meet regularly to review progress on the RI Bridges system and to secure federal funding through the standard Advance Planning Document (APD) process. The following communications between the State and its federal partners are attached to this report:

- Letter to FNS Requesting Additional SNAP ET Funding for Staffing (Dated April 17, 2018). This letter requests funding for two additional staff members so we can meet our goal of serving Rhode Islanders and ensuring they are afforded the ability to continue participation in SNAP.
- Special Master – Sixth Report (Dated May 1, 2018). This letter from the Special Master is regarding DHS’ SNAP timeliness and progress.
- FNS Procurements Letter (Dated April 30, 2018). This letter states we will provide an updated procurement tracker to FNS on a monthly basis.
- Materials regarding our EBT card program. This correspondence is part of regular SNAP reviews that FNS conducts each year.
- FNS Review Report on SNAP (Dated April 16, 2018). This correspondence is part of regular SNAP review of our Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents.
- April 2018 SNAP Application Timeliness Report. This is our monthly report that is part of the Gemmell agreement.
- Correspondence between the State and FNS regarding FNS’ review of DHS’ 2012 New Investment Plan.



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND AUTOMATED HEALTH SYSTEMS

Automated Health Systems Contract

In the summer of 2015, HealthSource RI (HSRI) and the Medicaid program decided to competitively procure a new contract for contact center services serving commercial health insurance and Medicaid customers. The procurement was developed to 1) improve the customer experience for HSRI and Medicaid customers, 2) to create price predictability by moving from a time and materials contract to fixed price and 3) to secure a performance based contract. The state issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) on October 1, 2015 and through the completion of the competitive bidding process, awarded a contract to Automated Health Systems (AHS), which included Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and penalties associated with not achieving them. The contract was executed on January 22, 2016.

Timeline and Proactive Measures

In April of 2016, it came to the attention of individuals at HSRI that the former CEO and President of AHS, Joseph W. Nocito, was under investigation for tax fraud. Upon learning this information, HSRI took steps to clarify the AHS corporate structure and the roles of its executive team. This included a phone conversation between HSRI and AHS staff, which was later memorialized at the state's request by AHS (see AHS Letter rec. 4_15_16, attached). This letter stated that Nocito was the sole member and chair of the AHS Board, but not an employee of the corporation, noting also that Dr. Moses Haregewoyn was appointed President of the corporation on September 11, 2015. It also stated AHS is owned entirely by an irrevocable trust (with an independent trustee) of which the sole beneficiary is Nocito. The letter describes Nocito as "a consultant and advisor as his chairman duties dictate."

HSRI Director Zachary Sherman and then-Secretary Elizabeth Roberts responded to AHS's letter on May 2, 2016 to demand certain written assurances from AHS regarding its contract with the state (see RI Response to AHS 5_02_16, attached). Specifically, this letter requests that AHS assure the state it will be able to "continue to provide the services specified by the contract, even in the event of a change in AHS Board membership and/or company personnel." The state also required AHS to immediately notify the state's designated contract manager in writing if any of the following events occurred:

- Any changes in company leadership or in the employees who have corporate responsibility for the management of the contract;
- Changes in the AHS Board membership or configuration;
- Any business changes it makes that will or may impact the management of the contract; and/or
- If Joseph Nocito, the AHS Board Chair, makes any decisions or takes any action with regards to the performance of the contract.

AHS restructured its Board in May of 2017. Nocito was removed as member and chair, and Joseph P. Cain III and Moses Haregewoyn were appointed as directors.

The State's Experience with AHS

The state's contract with AHS includes SLAs (see AHS Contract Amendment 7 SLAs, attached) to ensure high-quality customer service is provided to Rhode Islanders. The state regularly monitors these SLAs and meets with AHS to evaluate their performance. During HSRI's most recent Open Enrollment period, AHS handled over 95,000 calls with an average speed to answer of 30 seconds and a one percent abandonment rate, which is well below the industry average of five to eight percent as well as their contractually required service levels. AHS also implemented a new appointment option at the HSRI Walk-In Center and serviced close to 9,000 customers in-person. The state's current contract with AHS ends August 31, 2018 with four renewal options remaining.

