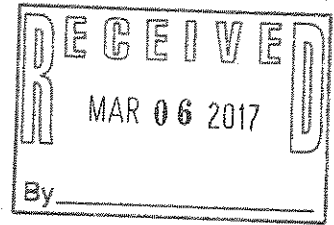




MAR 03 2017



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

Northeast Region

10 Causeway St.  
Room 501  
Boston, MA 02222

Eric Beane, Acting Director  
RI Department of Human Services  
Louis Pasteur Building  
57 Howard Avenue  
Cranston, RI 02920

Dear Acting Director Beane:

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) continues to monitor the implementation of RIBridges by the Rhode Island (RI) Department of Human Services (DHS). We were extremely pleased with the dialogue we had with you and Governor Raimondo on February 8, 2017, and have found the ongoing meetings between yourself and FNS staff very helpful. Nevertheless, as noted in the November 8, 2016 advanced notification letter, FNS is concerned that households may have been over-issued benefits as a result of the roll-out of RIBridges.

During FNS' ongoing site visits, data analysis, and communication with the State, FNS discovered that DHS had been establishing claims and, in some cases, pursuing claims against households affected by over-issuances related to the implementation of RIBridges. As a result, during the week of November 28, 2016, FNS required RI DHS to stop further establishment of claims and collection of claims that were established after the roll-out of RIBridges. The State responded that it would comply. FNS also requested the following information about claims development:

- Summary of DHS' overpayment analysis since RIBridges implementation
- Number of overpayments/claims developed in RIBridges
- Claim type, dollar amount, and overpayment period of each claim
- Reason for overpayment
- Copies of demand letters for each overpayment.

FNS also included this request for information in the response to RI's corrective action plan. Based on the January 31, 2017, Supplemental Response to the CAP, the above details were not provided in the format requested. As part of its review, FNS will need to validate the information provided in the Supplemental Response and the end-to-end claims functionality in RIBridges. FNS understands that the State is beginning to take steps to identify claims that were established in error, and we appreciate your efforts to identify and implement system fixes.


In addition, FNS continues to investigate the potential scope of over-issuances through other data provided by DHS, and may have additional data requests in the future to support any identified instances of likely over-issuances. Once FNS has a complete and accurate representation of all over-issued benefits erroneously provided by DHS, FNS will make a determination on how to proceed in regard to the over-issued

benefits. Until that time, FNS is reiterating to RI DHS to suspend establishment of new claims and all collection efforts against households for any claims established after the implementation of RIBridges. Collection can continue for only those claims that were previously established in INRhodes and converted successfully in RIBridges.

We appreciate your commitment to ensuring program access and integrity for all SNAP applicants and recipients. We will continue to work closely with you and your team to provide technical assistance and validate efforts taken as you progress with corrective actions. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact Bonnie Brathwaite at (617) 565-6397.

Sincerely,



 Kurt Messner  
Regional Administrator  
USDA Food and Nutrition Service

cc: Iwona Ramian