



**Rhode Island Department of Human Services**

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October 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 September 16, 2019 – October 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/DHS Call Center summaries;
- CCAP off-cycle payments;
- LTSS interim payments and;
- Correspondence with federal partners and Special Court Master

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, 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



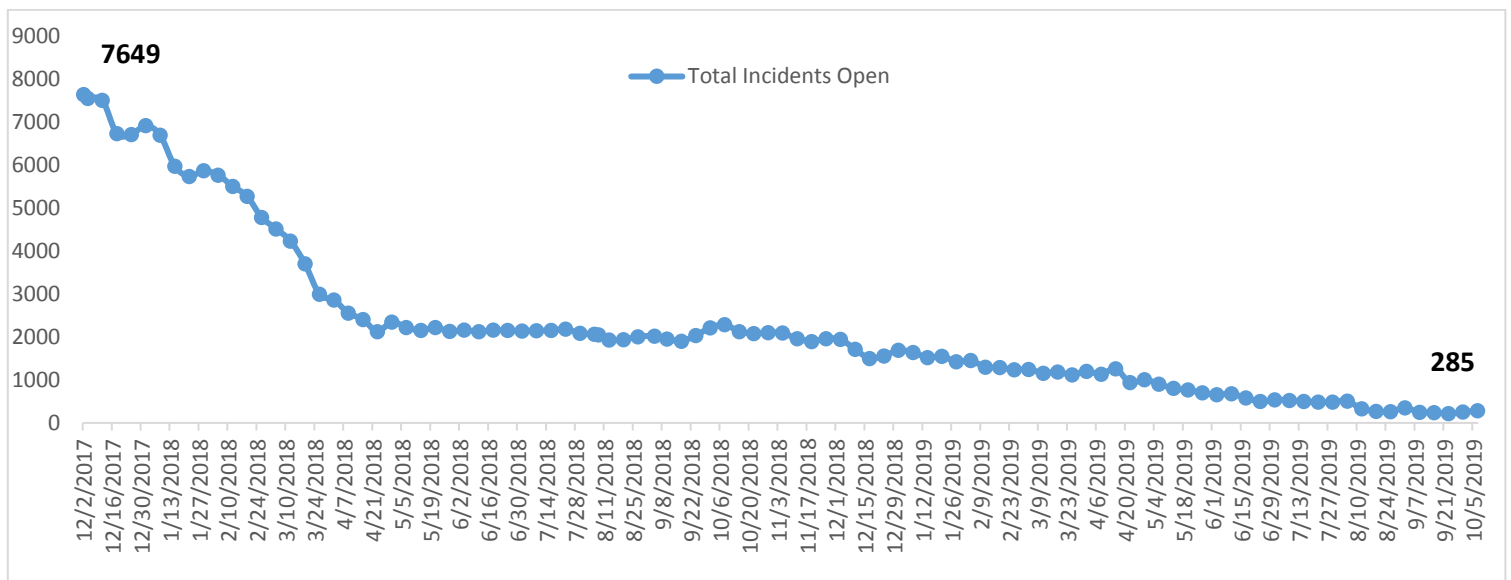
# RI Bridges: Monthly Update

## October 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 7,364 incidents. As of October 5, 2019, open incidents totaled 285 – a 96% drop since December 2017.



### DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

#### Hiring Update

DHS continues to make progress in strengthening its workforce. Since this September, DHS hired six employees. These include:

- 1 Data Control Clerk
- 1 Human Services Business Officer
- 1 Administrator, Financial Management
- 1 Principal Human Services Policy and Systems Specialist
- 1 Programming Services Officer/EBT Coordinator
- 1 Supervising Eligibility Technician

## Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
New Hire Orientation	9/30	6	3	0
Basic Navigation	10/1	6	1	1
Rhode Island Works (RIW) Program Training	9/16-9/23	36	0	9
Customer Service Aide	9/25	6	0	1
Wellness Training	9/26	6 (Two 3-hour sessions)	0	19
Quarterly Meeting	9/17-9/20	24 (Eight 3-hour sessions)	0	364
STAR Supervisor Training	9/20, 10/3, 10/8	24 (Three 6-hour sessions)	0	16
<b>Totals</b>		<b>108</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>410</b>

\*current number of staff trained is a duplicate number

\*\* This number includes staff members from Office of Rehabilitative Services and the Office of Child Support Services

### New Hire Orientation

This period we held one New Hire Orientation and an introduction to RIBridges, Basic Navigation. A total of three new staff members attended the New Hire Training and 1 of the new staff attended the Basic Navigation training.

### Current Staff Overview

Over the last month, staff members were offered training in several areas. New and current staff were offered training in several program areas such as Rhode Island Works (RIW), supervisor training and quarterly meetings provided information regarding Claims, Collection, and Recovery Unit and referrals to the Fraud Unit at Rhode Island's Department of Administration (DOA). In addition, during the quarterly meetings DHS' legal staff reviewed legal issues such as HIPAA issues.

### Workshop Descriptions

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

**RIW Training:** This training follows a "tell me, show me, let me try" design that allows lessons to be reinforced through a combination of auditory, visual and hands-on experiences. This means participants will have multiple opportunities to engage with key points of learning. The scenarios the participants will learn will increase in complexity to reflect common activities.

#### Learning objectives:

- Overview of application and data collection for RIW and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Understanding RIW and CCAP eligibility
- Understand how to read the Time Clock
- Understand how to read the Work Employment & Training (E & T) Module

- Differences between the ET and Employment and Career Advisor (ECA) roles for RIW
- Understand how to enter and lift a sanction
- Financial requirements for RIW and CCAP
- Interviewing for RIW
- Understand how to process an application for a Hardship

**Basic Navigation:** This is a one-day course that introduces a new DHS employee to learn basic skills on how to navigate through RIBridges system.

**Wellness Training:** This training provides our staff members information on how to deal with stress at work and in their personal lives. This training is facilitated by the state’s Employee Assistance Program.

**Quarterly Meetings:** DHS holds quarterly meetings with staff members to inform staff about upcoming changes, provide program updates, celebrate accomplishments, and show appreciation for our staff members.

**Customer Service Aide Training:** The CSA training focuses on RIBridges processes. The training approach combines instructor led portions, demonstrations, with hands-on exercises to provide a complete integrated policy and system learning experience.

**STAR Supervisor Training:** This training was designed by supervisors, for supervisors. The goals of the trainings are as follows:

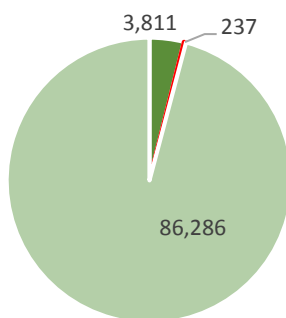
- Instill the DHS Guiding Principles in everyday work
- Support supervisors by enhancing leadership, coaching, and mentoring skills
- Build professional capacity through the DHS workforce
- Create tools that encourage and support a culture of continuous improvement
- Understand what constitutes good supervision
- Incorporate the DHS guiding principles in everyday work and decision making
- Resetting from past experiences and looking to the future of DHS
- Identifying behavioral styles

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of October 14, 2019, the number of pending new applications across all programs is 4,660. Overdue pending applications awaiting State action total is 2,082.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Exp	10	12	22	3	5	8	30
SNAP Non	331	244	575	13	18	31	606
CCAP	12	110	122	1	7	8	130
GPA Burial	0	1	1	1	7	8	9
SSP	0	72	72	0	65	65	137
GPA	30	35	65	45	31	76	141
RIW	94	87	181	16	97	113	294
Undetermined Medical	22	225	247	52	652	704	951
MAGI	35	30	65	26	66	92	157
MPP	2	11	13	1	7	8	21
Complex Medicaid	17	18	35	47	127	174	209
LTSS	172	683	855	120	1,000	1,120	1,975
<b>Totals</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>1,528</b>	<b>2,253</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>2,082</b>	<b>2,407</b>	<b>4,660</b>

## SNAP TIMELINESS

DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. The timeliness for SNAP applications was 96.1 percent for expedited and 97.2 percent for non-expedited for September 2019. SNAP timeliness was 56 percent in November 2017. We have achieved more than 90 percent timeliness since April 2018.

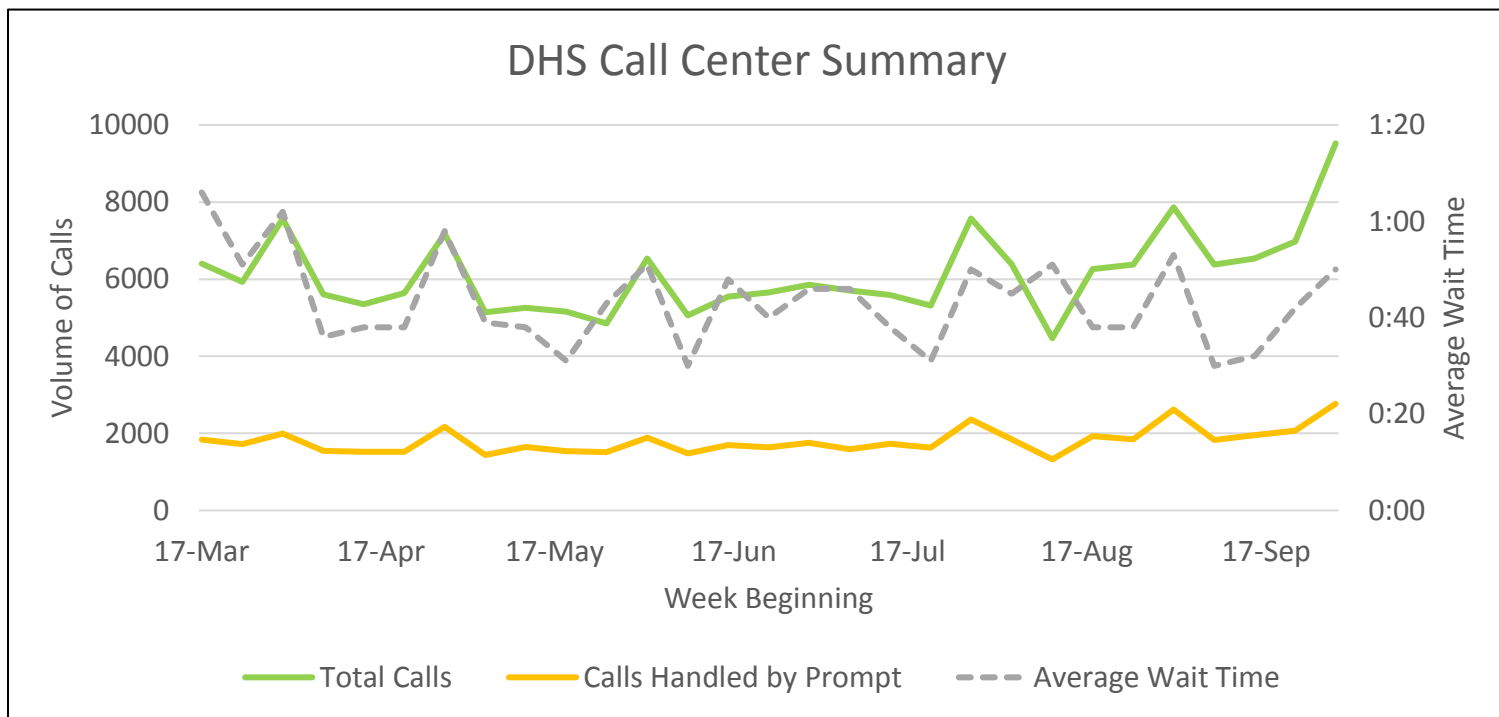


In September 2019, SNAP benefits were issued timely to more than 86,000 households. The number of applications not processed timely represents less than 1 percent of our SNAP population.

Untimely September Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

## CALL CENTER

With more than 9,500 calls during the last week of September 2019, the average wait time was just over 50 minutes. The six-week average is 40 minutes, 9 seconds.



## CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between September 10 – October 17, 2019.

Note: Off-cycle 4B is abnormally high due to two large sites (YGP and Boys & Girls) having prior batches ready for approval.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
7	09/10/2019	615	\$2,761,815
7A	09/12/2019	23	\$29,977
7B	09/19/2019	42	\$114,839
8	09/24/2019	659	\$2,755,343
8A	09/26/219	86	\$99,730
8B	10/03/2019	100	\$224,600
9	10/08/2019	670	\$2,635,687
9A	10/10/2019	22	\$13,014
9B	10/17/2019	36	\$58,696

Some of the off-cycle payrolls are larger than normal. We had help from a temp employee to work through a back log of some back billing. There will likely be a few more spikes in payroll while we work to catch up.

Total Batch (7, 7A & 7B)	680	\$2,906,632
Off-cycle (7A & 7B)	65	\$144,817
Provider off-cycle/total	9.56%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	4.98%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (8, 8A & 8B)	845	\$3,079,672
Off-cycle (8A & 8B)	186	\$324,330
Providers off-cycle/total	22.01%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	10.53%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (9, 9A & 9B)	728	\$2,707,396
Off-cycle (9A)	58	\$71,710
Providers off-cycle/total	7.97%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.65%	-

## LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 1000 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 paid out approximately \$21 million in interim payments to facilities for the state fiscal year 2019. Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing as we continue to meet with long term care facilities across the state. In total, we have collected about \$50 million in reconciliation payments so far.

## 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:

- September 26, 2019: Rhode Island Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Quality Control case and procedural error rates (CAPER)
- October 3, 2019: Rhode Island Formal Warning Update Letter
- October 4, 2019: Rhode Island Federal Fiscal Year 2019 Corrective Action Plan Validation Visit Letter
- October 15, 2019: Special Master's 23rd report to the courts
- October 15, 2019: SNAP Application Timeliness report as part of Gemmell agreement