



**Rhode Island Department of Human Services**

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November 19, 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 October 16, 2019 – November 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

Within correspondence, please note that we have included the Gemmell Court's Order that "without admitting any fault or liability" the State has complied with the terms of the Settlement Agreement; and as a result, the Court's jurisdiction was terminated, and the Special Master's term of service ended.

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



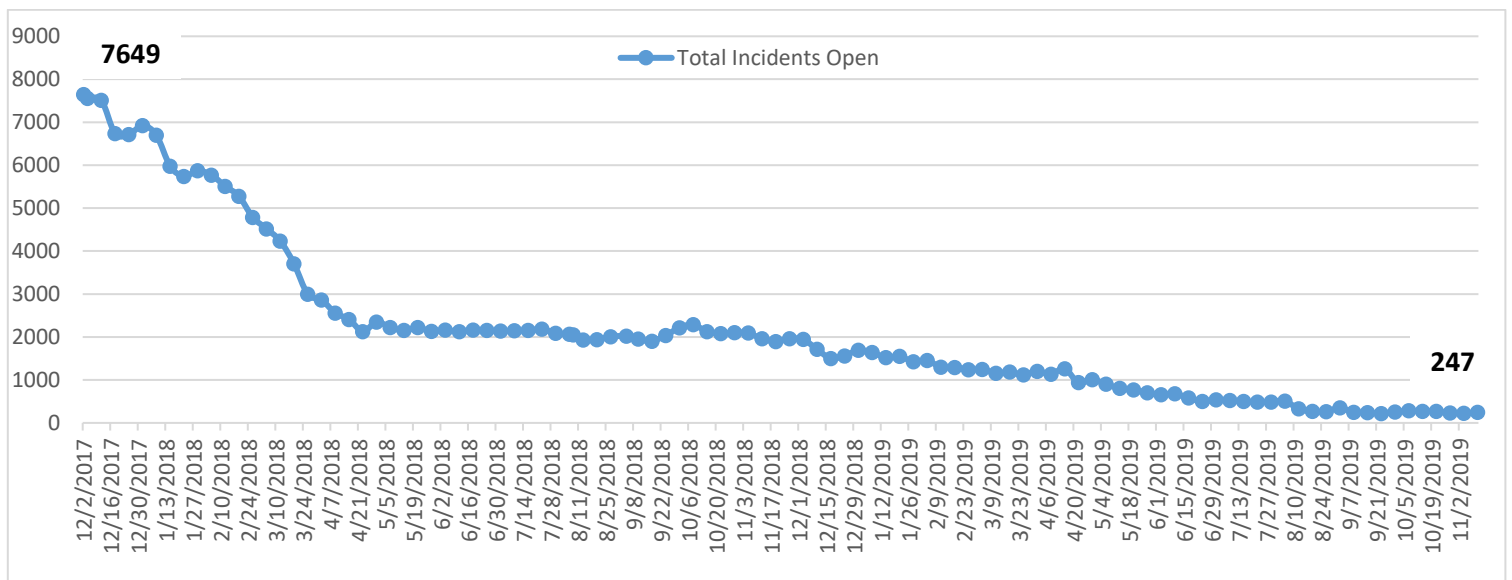
# RI Bridges: Monthly Update

## November 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 7,402 incidents. As of November 2, 2019, open incidents totaled 247 – a 97% drop since December 2017.



### DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

#### Hiring Update

DHS continues to make progress in strengthening its workforce. Since October, DHS hired ten employees including:

- 5 Eligibility Technicians
- 1 Principal Clerk dedicated to our Quality Control Unit
- 1 Administrator, Family and Children’s Services dedicated to Child Care Licensing
- 2 Human Services Policy and Systems Specialists dedicated to Child Care Licensing
- 1 Chief Human Services Business Officer

## Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
New Hire Orientation	11-4-2019 – 11-5-2019	12	2	0
Basic Navigation	11-7-2019	6	2	0
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)Training	11-12-2019 – 11-14-2019	18	2	3
<b>Totals</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>

\*current number of staff trained is a duplicate number

During this past reporting period, the Center for Staff Development and Learning has spent most of its time developing training curriculum and working on materials for the release that will be occurring the week of December 13, 2019.

The staff is working on curriculum development for:

- Claims Collection and Recovery Unit
- Employment and Career Advisors for the Rhode Island Works Program participants

Staff have also been developing job aides for the Operational Release (improved functionality in RIBridges) for DHS Staff members in the areas of:

- Long Term Services and Supports
- Customer Service Aides
- Other topical areas

### *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 one new staff member 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 on the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

### *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 Department, its organizational structure, and its policies and procedures.

**Basic Navigation:** This is a one-day course which presents basic navigation skills to new DHS employees with the goal of helping workers through their early familiarization process with the RIBridges system.

**Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP):** The SNAP Workshop is designed to introduce Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policies and their interaction with RIBridges. The workshop approach combines instructor led trainings, demonstrations, and hands-on exercises to provide a complete and integrated learning experience.

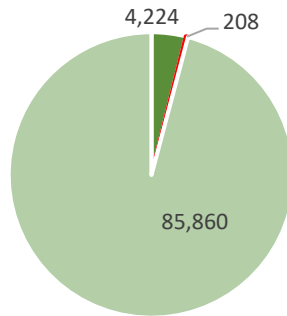
## PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of November 15, 2019, the number of pending new applications across all programs is 4,812. Overdue pending applications awaiting State action total is 1,994.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Exp	9	30	39	2	8	10	49
SNAP Non	361	244	605	27	21	48	653
CCAP	6	78	84	0	6	6	90
GPA Burial	0	1	1	1	6	7	8
SSP	0	67	67	0	42	42	109
GPA	31	52	83	49	22	71	154
RIW	88	80	168	19	88	107	275
Undetermined Medical	30	320	350	60	663	723	1,073
MAGI	40	31	71	44	63	107	178
MPP	5	26	31	0	3	3	34
Complex Medicaid	15	23	38	41	128	169	207
LTSS	211	685	896	142	944	1,086	1,982
Totals	796	1,637	2,433	385	1,994	2,379	4,812

## SNAP TIMELINESS

DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. The timeliness for SNAP applications was 96.3 percent for expedited and 97.6 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.

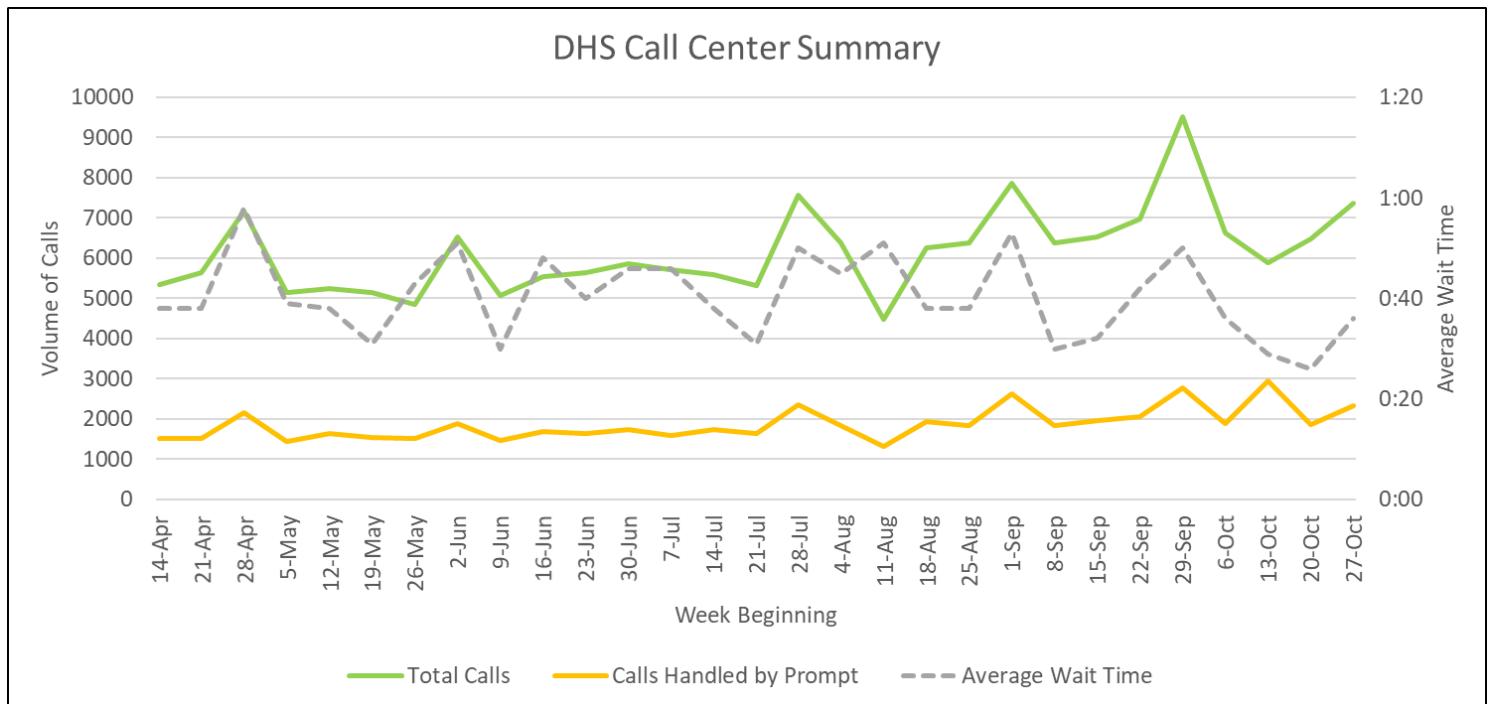


In October 2019, SNAP benefits were issued timely to more than 85,000 households. The number of applications not processed timely represents less than 1 percent of our SNAP population.

Untimely October Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

## CALL CENTER

With more than 7,300 calls during the last week of October 2019, the average wait time was just over 36 minutes, which is 14 minutes less than the average during the last week of September 2019. The six-week average is 36 minutes, 53 seconds.



## CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between October 22 – November 14, 2019.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
10	10/22/2019	659	\$2,630,148
10A	10/24/2019	40	\$72,779
10B	10/31/2019	59	\$125,193
11	11/05/2019	662	\$2,668,414
11A	11/07/2019	56	\$85,575
11	11/14/2019	34	\$49,014

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (10, 10A & 10B)	758	\$2,828,120
Off-cycle (10A & 10B)	99	\$197,971
Provider off-cycle/total	13.06%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	7.00%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (11 11A & 11B)	752	\$2,804,003
Off-cycle (11A & 11B)	..90	\$135,590
Providers off-cycle/total	11.97%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	4.84%	-

## LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 944 overdue LTSS applications pending state action.

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 \$59.4 million in reconciliation payments.

## 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:

- November 1, 2019: DHS Formal Warning Update Response and Timeliness Methodology attachment
- November 1, 2019: Special Master's 24<sup>th</sup> report to the courts
- November 1, 2019: Gemmell et al v. DHS – Dismissal and Attorney Fees