



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

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December 2, 2016

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Abney and Chairwoman Serpa,

Thank you for the opportunity to share more information on the Unified Health Infrastructure Project (UHIP). Attached you will find the materials and summaries that are responsive to your weekly request.

We continue to work hard in collaboration with our federal partners to better serve customers. As you know, we have experienced issues in prior months with first-of-the-month payments. We are encouraged that we did not see similar payment issues impacting our customers this month.

As a reminder, there are typically less than 200 Supplemental Social Security payments each month that bounce back for a number of reasons – for example, if someone closes a bank account associated with their direct deposit. This is not a system issue.

This week, the new system also completed its first post-eligibility verification cycle. Through this process, 487 customers were appropriately deemed ineligible for Medicaid. This is an important protection built into the new system that will achieve savings for taxpayers and preserve services for those who are truly eligible.

Additionally this month, about 3,000 SNAP recipients did not submit the paperwork needed to recertify their eligibility. Historically, about half of individuals required to recertify in a given month do not respond with the necessary information. The 3,000 SNAP recipients will regain access to their SNAP benefits if they submit the necessary paperwork and are determined eligible. This is the result of federal requirements, not the launch of the new system. We have processes in place to assist recipients who come to the field offices to submit past-due paperwork.

Below, please find this week's response to your weekly questions.

Weekly Question #1: Last week, we sent a plan to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) that lays out actions we are taking to ensure a fully compliant SNAP program that best serves the needs of the Rhode Islanders we

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serve. Therefore, please note that since the Food and Nutrition Service is still reviewing the Corrective Action Plan submitted last week, they are not requiring us to submit a weekly report today.

Weekly Question #2: Updated responses to Original Questions #8, #10, and #16 are below.

- *Original Question #8:* Precise numbers on how many existing clients didn't receive any benefits, how many received some but not all that they were entitled to, and how many received incorrect payments.
 1. **Response:** All of the below missing or incorrect benefits were identified this week but have already been resolved as a part of our ongoing reconciliation activities. There are currently no known missing/incorrect benefits and payments to clients in the mentioned programs. We did not issue benefits for SSP this week as that process is once a month.

| Program | Missing/Incorrect Benefits Identified This Week | |
|---------|---|--|
| | <u>All Resolved</u> | |
| SNAP | 15 | |
| RIW | 5 | |
| CCAP | 135 | |
| SSP* | 0 | |

** SSP payments were issued this week as part of the normal monthly payment process. No instances of missing/incorrect benefits have been confirmed .

- *Original Question # 10:* How many providers did not receive payments when they were accustomed to receiving?
 1. **Response:** Please see above. In the last week, there were no regular payments scheduled to providers. CCAP providers who were identified as having received incorrect payments in the past were corrected this week.
- *Original Question # 16:* Glitches reports.
 1. **Response:** The production reports used by Deloitte to lists priority issues that need to be addressed and fixed are attached. (Labeled "Daily Health Reports.") Lists of priority issues can be found on slide two of each daily health report.

Weekly Question #3: Application and payment manual work arounds.

1. **Response:** Attached are data, tracked by Deloitte, on application and payment workarounds for each program as defined in last week's report to the Honorable Joint Committee. (Document titled "**Manual Workaround Data 12 2.**") Please note, as discussed during last week's hearing, we are working to develop a more comprehensive report on interim business processes and other manual

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interventions. One such process, off-cycle payments to long term care facilities, continues as described at last week's hearing.

Weekly Question #4: An update on our escalation team in the Call Center.

1. **Response:** The Escalation Unit at the DHS Call Center is utilizing the Customer Relationship Management platform, and is acting as support to the Call Center. As we mentioned during Monday's legislative hearing, our Escalation Unit continues to handle complex and urgent cases to help connect customers in urgent need to services as quickly as possible. The Escalation Unit is staffed by some of our most experienced and knowledgeable employees.

Weekly Question #5: The status of the DHS call-back system:

1. **Response:** Our Call Back system is functioning. As we mentioned during Monday's legislative hearing, we continue to partner with HealthSource RI to improve our call center and implement best practices to answer a higher percentage of calls, reduce wait times, and improve the customer experience.

Weekly Question #6: Report on additional efforts to enhance employee engagement and examples of any suggestions or feedback implemented.

1. **Response:** Leadership continue to appreciate the work of DHS employees to serve Rhode Islanders. Many DHS employees have expressed a desire for additional training, and the Corrective Action Plan submitted to the Food and Nutrition Service last week includes steps to provide ongoing training and support to employees. In addition, Director Depena continues to maintain an active presence in the field offices. Next week, she will start a "Coffee with the Director" series to provide opportunities for employees across all field offices to meet with her directly, express concerns, and provide feedback to improve operations. Secretary Roberts continues to schedule visits to field offices as well so she can speak directly with employees and respond to their concerns.

Weekly Question #7: Report on progress toward implementing different measures to address regional office wait times and capture true customer experience (once implemented):

1. **Response:** DHS continues to make improvements to lobby operations, including through some steps taken in the Providence office this week:
 - a. Directing customers who are coming into the office for a replacement EBT card to a side window for expedient services. This allows them to be served without needing to get the normal "lobby ticket" and wait for their number to be called.
 - b. Increased number of interpreters and bi-lingual employees to help non-English speaking customers understand the status of their cases as well as application processes and requirements.

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Weekly Question #8: Attached, please find document titled “**UHIP Daily Media Updates.**”

- **Please Note:** As with last week, during today’s update to the media, we released new UHIP metrics, which show the status of applications in the RI Bridges system. Those metrics are (File labeled “**UHIP Metrics 12-2-16**”).

Additionally, per Sharon Reynolds-Ferland’s recent request, attached are health daily updates which include Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, December 2, 2016 (**See attached “Production Daily Health Reports”**).

We hope these materials are helpful in answering your questions, and are happy to follow up with any additional data or information you need moving forward. As mentioned earlier today, we are working to respond to several questions raised at last week’s hearing, which per discussion with Sharon Reynolds-Ferland, we plan to deliver to you next Friday.

Sincerely,



Michael DiBiase, Director, Department of Administration



Elizabeth Roberts, Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services



Melba Depeña Affigne, Director, Department of Human Services