STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

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November 18, 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 most recent request.

This project continues to be our top priority, and our team is working to promptly resolve technology issues and improve business processes.

When the Raimondo administration took office, we faced many challenges in our DHS field offices:

- The process of signing up for benefits was very inefficient for our customers.
- Clients had to see multiple workers to enroll in different programs, and could only get help at their assigned offices.
- If a client's caseworker was out sick or on vacation, responses to questions about pending paper applications could be delayed.
- There was no centralized call center, and no option to apply online or get helped at the field office of a client's choosing.
- Data on wait times, pending applications, and other aspects of the customer experience was not systematically tracked or evaluated – creating big limitations for management.

At Governor Raimondo's direction, we engaged in a LEAN quality improvement initiative to better understand our data and improve customer service. We made great strides, but we could only go so far, as we were still operating a paper-based system.

We now have better data that we are using to improve outcomes, and track real-time trends in worker productivity. This week, our workers rendered more SNAP eligibility determinations than any other week since the new system launched. And, the data-informed changes that we made in our Providence office since our system went live are already putting us on the right path to improve customer service at our busiest office.

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With the new system, we are now able to verify eligibility in real time on an ongoing basis through a process called post-eligibility verification, or PEV. We have run the first PEV cycle through the new system over the past month. PEV is an important protection built into the new system that will achieve savings for taxpayers and preserve services for those who are truly eligible. Customers have already been notified if they need to submit documentation to confirm their eligibility for benefits. On December first, services will end for the first set of customers who have been determined ineligible for benefits through this process. It's important to note that if you hear from customers on or around this date – they may have been appropriately determined ineligible.

Our goal is to see the system start to stabilize by the start of the new year, with steady improvements in performance and business processes by spring time. This is in line with expectations for a project of this size and complexity.

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

Weekly Question #1: A copy of the weekly report sent to the U.S. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is attached. **(See attached files labeled "Weekly FNS Report" and "FNS Letter November 18.")**

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.
    - **Response:** All of the following missing or incorrect benefits were identified this week but have already been corrected as a part of our ongoing reconciliation activities. There are currently 0 known missing/incorrect benefits and payments. We did not issue benefits for SSP this week as that process is once a month.

Program	Missing/Incorrect Benefits Identified This Week ALL RESOLVED
SNAP	69
RIW	11
CCAP	61
SSP	0

- *Original Question # 10:* How many providers did not receive payments when they were accustomed to receiving?
    - **Response:** See above. In the past week, 61 CCAP providers were identified that were missing payments. All have been corrected.

- *Original Question # 16:* The production support report used by Deloitte that lists the issues that need to be addressed and fixed is attached. **(File labeled Production Support Executive Status_11 18 16.)**

Weekly Question #3: Below are data on application workarounds and payment workarounds that have been entered into the system. The data are presented by program. These are workarounds that have been logged by Deloitte. We are aware that there are other workarounds being conducted (for example, related to business process) that are not fully reflected in this data. We are working to better understand, collect and categorize these issues, and we will provide data to you as soon as it is available. Similarly, we are collecting system and business process data related to Medicaid programs, and we will send that data to you as soon as possible.

- **a.) Application work arounds**

Program	Manual Work Arounds	Total Applications	% of applications done via manual work around
CCAP	3	127	2%
GPA	2	41	5%
RIW	1	198	1%
SNAP	5	666	1%
SSP	1	53	2%

- **b.) Payment work arounds**

Program	Manual Work Arounds	Total Applications	% of applications done via manual work around
CCAP	61	61	100% (no scheduled CCAP run for this week)
RIW	19	163	12%
SNAP	27	1899	1%
SSP	No Payments Scheduled		

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

- **Response:** The Department of Human Services has created a new Escalation unit that services complex issues that come in through both Call Centers, Walk In Center and other channels, such as social media and state offices. The team has streamlined the escalation process from receipt to completion. DHS has added two supervisors, and a Tier 2 team at the DHS Providence Office,

formalized the Tier-2 referral process for priority escalations and enhanced system training to include use of a CRM and reporting. Last week, roughly 90 high-profile escalations were referred to the DHS Escalation Unit by state offices, all have been resolved. Progress is being made daily to incorporate this team and workflow into our day-to-day operations, with the focus on triaging issues to a smaller team who is accountable for resolution, getting technical support on difficult system issues, tracking the volume, types of problems and reporting the outcomes.

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

- **Response:** On November 14 we reinitiated our Call Back function.

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

- **Response:** This week, Director DiBiase visited the Providence DHS field office to speak with employees and hear their concerns directly. He also spoke to clients waiting in the lobby.

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

- **Response:** After putting new lobby management practices in place at our Providence office, we are not seeing as many repeat customers come through our doors. We are now making better use of our indoor space to reduce the number of people waiting outside the office in the rain or cold.

Weekly Question #8: Attached, please find document titled **Weekly Press Reports.**

- **Please Note:** An update was not provided to the media on Thursday of this week. With 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 attached here. (**File labeled "New Metrics by Program_11-18-2016."**) In an effort to provide more comprehensive information, we have broken down these numbers by program and by each week going back to the launch date. Moving forward, we will continue to provide updates in this format on a weekly basis.

Additionally, per Sharon Reynolds Ferland's recent request for the last weekly report, attached are health daily updates which include Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, November 18**. (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.

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State of Rhode Island General Assembly

November 18, 2016

Sincerely,

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Michael DiBiase

Director, Department of Administration

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Secretary Elizabeth Roberts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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Melba Depeña Affigne

Director, Department of Human Services