



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION**

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November 14, 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. We continue to provide additional support and training to our workers, and are focusing on improving customer service. We also are laser-focused on working pending applications and enhancing our Call Center operations.

When the Raimondo administration came into office, wait times at DHS were unacceptable – and we drove them down. We are committed to reducing wait times again. Last week, we took action in one of our busiest offices – the Providence field office – and implemented new lobby management practices to help our DHS customers reduce and in some cases avoid a long wait in the lobby:

- The new process involves a better way to assess and triage clients' needs as soon as they walk in the door. We now have greeters stationed full time to welcome and speak with every customer.
- Our new 24/7 drop box is working well. Customers can drop off applications at their convenience without having to wait in line. The boxes are checked every hour by a DHS worker to ensure timely tracking.
- We have a scanning station inside the Providence lobby. DHS employees receive assistance with scanning to ensure all documents are indexed properly.
- Clerks are providing lobby tickets to customers and scheduling appointments for other customers to come back another time. We continue to assist customers with urgent needs, and to prioritize timely processing of expedited SNAP applications.

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- It may take a few weeks for our workers and customers to adjust to this new business process, but we are confident that it will make things easier for our customers in the long term.
- One goal we shared with you during the October 20 hearing was to more accurately track wait times. This new lobby management process allows us to track wait times from the moment a customer walks in the door versus when they formally check in at a window. As a reminder, we expect our data to reflect this change with a sharp increase in wait times.

As requested, this week and every week until further notice, we are providing you with answers to the following questions:

*Weekly Question #1:* A copy of the weekly report sent to the U.S. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is attached.

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

*Original Question #8 update:* 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.

- As we reported last week, 110 individuals were potentially impacted by a system issue related to the checking/savings identifier for depositing state supplemental payment funds. However, after further analysis, we found that only 43 individuals were, in fact, impacted, as on a monthly basis, the State receives a report on the SSP recipients who have passed away, closed accounts, or had their bank accounts frozen. The funds for those 43 were sent to the banks and deposited in the appropriate savings accounts. DHS staff is contacting these 43 people to confirm that their SSP payments were available to them this morning. We are continuing to work with the others whose bank accounts were frozen or closed and to verify new account information so they can be paid as quickly as possible.
- SNAP/RIW – There were 49 SNAP/RIW cases that experienced an error upon initial submission to the EBT card vendor. However, they were reprocessed that same evening and benefits were present on the EBT card as of the next business day.
- CCAP – There were 27 Providers whose attendance was not entered before the payroll was completed. We will further update you on this issue by the end of the week.

*Original Question # 10 update:* How many providers did not receive payments when they were accustomed to receiving?

- See above re: CCAP.

*Original Question # 16 update:* The production support report used by Deloitte that lists the issues that need to be addressed and fixed is attached.

*Weekly Question #3:* The scope of manual work-arounds is below.

- There were 104 reported blocked cases that required manual workarounds this week. Here is the program breakdown:

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- 4 Child Care Assistance Program
- 7 Medicaid
- 9 RI Works
- 18 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- 6 Long Term Services and Supports
- 17 Qualified Health Plan
- 43 State Supplemental Payment

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

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. For example, last week, roughly 90 high-profile escalations were referred to the DHS Escalation Unit by state offices, which are being actively worked and 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

Last week we reconfigured our call-back system to best meet the needs of our customers. Today, November 14, we successfully reinitiated the improved call-back system.

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

- This week, EOHHS Secretary Elizabeth Roberts visited the Wakefield DHS field office to speak with the supervisor and two eligibility technicians to hear their concerns directly. She 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):

- See the above narrative regarding the changes in our Providence lobby process.

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

Additionally, per Sharon Reynolds Ferland's recent request, attached is the Daily Health Reports for this week and the previous week. She also requested the letter from FNS asking for additional data and a plan of action for SNAP recipients. Attached is a copy of the formal letter from the FNS Northeast Regional Office.

The USDA has acknowledged our efforts to address technical and business process issues as they emerge, and we appreciate the support of both the USDA and the FNS Northeast Regional Office as we work together to address these challenges during the implementation of our new eligibility system.

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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.

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

*Enclosures*