

Daily Press Reports through 10/18 -10/28: Merged into single document by House Staff

From: McCabe, Brenna (DOA)

Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 11:24 AM

To: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>

Subject: UHIP update

Good morning –

In an effort to share more timely information with the media and general public about the UHIP launch, we will begin providing a morning update shortly after the daily UHIP governance meeting. In today's meeting, the following topics were discussed:

- **Extended Hours:** As announced yesterday, Governor Raimondo has directed DHS to extend its customer office hours at the Providence Field Office two days a week. Every Tuesday and Wednesday, starting today, the Providence office will remain open until 6:30pm. We will have information later this week about the number of customers who took advantage of the extended hours.
- **Legislative Hearing:** The governance team discussed its preparation for the legislative hearing on Thursday. Secretary Roberts, Director DiBiase and Director Depena Affigne will present on behalf of the administration. The team is preparing materials requested by the committee. Staff will provide copies of all materials prepared for distribution at the hearing to media on Thursday afternoon.
- **Next Media Availability:** Secretary Roberts, Director DiBiase and Director Depena Affigne will continue to hold a regular media availability on Friday afternoons to provide updates on the system launch. We'll alert you about the specific time and location for this week's availability later this week.

For planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30pm to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1 p.m. so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna

From: McCabe, Brenna (DOA)
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 11:16 AM
To: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Subject: Daily UHIP Update - Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2016

Good morning –

Today's UHIP governance meeting touched on a number of topics, including:

- **Extended hours update:** Yesterday was the first day of extended hours at the Providence Field Office. As a reminder, the Providence office will remain open until 6:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Wednesday until further notice. The UHIP leadership team will be able to provide a more complete update about the first week of extended hours at Friday's media availability.
- **Friday media availability:** As mentioned yesterday, the UHIP leadership team will hold a regular, weekly media availability. Specific time and location will be provided this week. We will provide DHS's latest data submission to FNS at Friday's availability, along with updated fact sheets and data releases we've provided in past weeks.

Going forward, we will also share a daily snapshot of several key application metrics which the governance team tracks on a daily basis. This is raw, preliminary data:

- 765 applications were submitted yesterday
- 291 applications were approved yesterday
- The current application backlog is 7,784

DHS Director Melba Depeña has authorized overtime for employees at all field offices so they can work on tackling backlog before and after normal operations. This will allow our team to better focus on directly serving clients' needs during business hours.

A reminder again for planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30pm to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. **To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1 p.m. so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.**

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna

From: McCabe, Brenna (DOA)
Sent: Thursday, October 20, 2016 9:48 AM
To: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Cc: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS) <Ashley.G.OShea@ohhs.ri.gov>
Subject: UHIP Update - Thursday, Oct. 20, 2016

Good morning –

Today's UHIP governance meeting touched on a number of topics, including:

- **Pending Expedited SNAP Cases:** The group discussed plans to work and complete all pending expedited SNAP cases before the end of the week. EOHHS Deputy Secretary Wayne Hannon will coordinate this effort. Additionally, the group discussed a broader effort to clear the entire application backlog (for all UHIP-supported services) by the end of November.
- **Providence Field Office:** The team is reviewing the physical layout of the Providence Field Office's lobby and will work with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to consider short-term layout changes that can improve customer service by supporting better traffic direction toward key services. DHS has also moved additional supervisory staff to the lobby to help triage customer needs as soon as people enter the building.

Below is the daily snapshot of several key application metrics, which the governance team tracks on a daily basis. (Note: This is raw, preliminary data and includes applications for all services supported by UHIP):

- 571 applications were submitted yesterday (-194 compared to Tuesday)
- 324 applications were approved yesterday (+33 compared to Tuesday)
- The current application backlog is 8,031 (+247 compared to Tuesday)

A reminder again for planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30 p.m. to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. **To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1 p.m.** so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna

From: McCabe, Brenna (DOA)
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2016 9:40 AM
To: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Cc: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS) <Ashley.G.OShea@ohhs.ri.gov>
Subject: UHIP Update -- Friday, October 21, 2016

Good morning –

Today's UHIP governance meeting touched on a number of topics, including:

- **Escalation Unit:** In an effort to address the most urgent individual cases, the team is strengthening its escalation capacity. HSRI Director Zach Sherman, who has experience overseeing an effective escalation unit, will lead the effort to develop an approach to meet the unique demands of individuals impacted by the launch of the new system. A team will be in place as soon as possible.
- **Media Availability and Data Release:** The UHIP leadership team will hold its weekly media availability this afternoon at 1:30 p.m. in DOA Conference Room 2B. Staff will provide media with materials and copies of the weekly DHS data submission to FNS at the meeting.

Below is the daily snapshot of several key application metrics which the governance team tracks on a daily basis. (Note: This is raw, preliminary, daily data and includes applications for all services supported by UHIP):

- 651 applications were submitted yesterday (+80 compared to Wednesday)
- 316 applications were approved yesterday (-8 compared to Wednesday)
- The current application backlog is 8,366 (+335 compared to Tuesday)

Brief note on backlog: We expect the non-lobby backlog to continue grow modestly as we put an enhanced focus on lobby service, but have plans in place to increase completion of non-lobby work to reduce the number of pending applications.

A reminder again for planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30 p.m. to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1 p.m. so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna

From: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS)
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2016 9:33 AM
To: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS) <Ashley.G.OShea@ohhs.ri.gov>
Cc: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Subject: UHIP Update -- Monday, October 24, 2016

Good morning –

Today's UHIP governance meeting touched on a number of topics, including:

- **Preparation for November 1 Activities:** On the first business day of each month, the system completes a number of significant activities, including processing all SNAP payments, state supplemental payments, Rhode Island Works payments and payments to child care agencies. Additionally, November 1 is the first day of HealthSource RI's open enrollment period, which is likely to increase call volume and web traffic. In October, there were a number of issues identified on the first of the month, most of which were resolved in a matter of days. The team is preparing contingency plans should issues emerge again.
- **Reduced Wait Times at Call Center:** Last week, DHS call volume was the lowest it's been since the new system launched and the average call wait time dropped from a high of 80 minutes during the first week of October to 35 minutes. Additionally, DHS reactivated 'call backs' on Friday afternoon to further reduce wait times.
- **Post Eligibility Verification:** One of the functions of the new system is enhanced protections against waste and fraud through a process called 'post eligibility verification' (PEV), which runs customers' eligibility against a number of state and federal databases each month. The first batch of PEV notices will be delivered this week. Customers who receive a notice requesting information have an opportunity to submit documentation to demonstrate that they remain eligible. Notices being delivered this week are requests for information. They are not termination notices. Customers who are not able to demonstrate their continued eligibility will receive a termination notice later in November.

Below is the daily snapshot of several key application metrics as of COB on Friday which the governance team tracks on a daily basis. (Note: This is raw, preliminary, daily data and includes applications for all services supported by UHIP):

- 417 applications were submitted Friday (-234 compared to Thursday)
- 284 applications were approved Friday (-32 compared to Thursday)
- The application backlog as of COB Friday was 8,499 (+133 compared to Thursday)

(A brief note on backlog: We expect the non-lobby backlog to continue grow modestly as we put an enhanced focus on lobby service, but have plans in place to increase completion of non-lobby work to reduce the number of pending applications.)

A reminder again for planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30pm to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1pm so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna

From: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS)
Sent: Tuesday, October 25, 2016 9:19 AM
To: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS) <Ashley.G.OShea@ohhs.ri.gov>
Cc: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Subject: UHIP Update -- Tuesday, October 25, 2016

Good morning –

Today's UHIP governance meeting touched on a number of topics, including:

- **Child Care Provider Payments:** The system will process child care payments today and approved payments will be delivered by the end of the week.
- **Post Eligibility Verification:** One of the functions of the new system is enhanced protections against waste and fraud through a process called 'post eligibility verification' (PEV), which runs customers' eligibility against a number of state and federal databases each month. The first batch of PEV notices have been mailed. Customers who receive a notice requesting information have an opportunity to submit documentation to demonstrate that they remain eligible. Notices being delivered this week are requests for information. They are not termination notices. Customers who are not able to demonstrate their continued eligibility will receive a termination notice later in November.
- **Preparation for November 1 Activities:** On the first business day of each month, the system completes a number of significant activities, including processing all SNAP payments, state supplemental payments, Rhode Island Works payments and payments to child care agencies. Additionally, as noted yesterday, November 1 is the first day of HealthSource RI's open enrollment period, which is likely to increase call volume and web traffic. In October, there were a number of issues identified on the first of the month, most of which were resolved in a matter of days. The team is preparing contingency plans should issues emerge again.

Below is the daily snapshot of several key application metrics as of COB yesterday which the governance team tracks on a daily basis. Today's data includes applications processed over the weekend. (Note: This is raw, preliminary, daily data and includes applications for all services supported by UHIP):

- 360 applications were submitted Monday (-57 compared to Friday)
- 334 applications were approved Monday (+50 compared to Friday)
- The application backlog as of COB Monday was 8,525 (+26 compared to Friday)

As the team moves more applications through indexing and scanning, the application backlog is growing at a slower rate than it had been last week. Only 26 applications were added to the application backlog yesterday.

A reminder again for planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30pm to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1pm so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna

From: McCabe, Brenna (DOA)
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:09 PM
To: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Cc: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS) <Ashley.G.OShea@ohhs.ri.gov>
Subject: RE: UHIP Update -- Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2016

Correction: Today's data **does not** include applications processed over the weekend. We apologize for the error.

Thank you.

From: McCabe, Brenna (DOA)
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:05 PM
To: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Cc: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS) <Ashley.G.OShea@ohhs.ri.gov>
Subject: UHIP Update -- Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2016

Good morning –

Today's UHIP governance meeting touched on a number of topics, including:

- **Saturday Hours and Extended Hours at Woonsocket and Providence:** Yesterday, DHS announced it will offer extended office hours at the Woonsocket field office every Tuesday and Wednesday until further notice. In addition, the agency will also offer customer hours every Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Providence and Woonsocket field offices until further notice.
- **Escalation Unit:** Following on recommendations from legislators made during last week's House Finance/Oversight hearing, DHS has designated an escalation unit of six people who will be dedicated to triage specific, individual cases when eligibility technicians are unable to complete applications or processes.
- **Preparation for November 1 Activities:** On the first business day of each month, the system completes a number of significant activities, including processing all SNAP payments, state supplemental payments, Rhode Island Works payments and payments to child care agencies. Additionally, as noted yesterday, November 1 is the first day of HealthSource RI's open enrollment period, which is likely to increase call volume and web traffic. In October, there were a number of issues identified on the first of the month, most of which were resolved in a matter of days. The team is preparing contingency plans should issues emerge again.
- **Customer Portal:** A number of customers and advocates have raised concerns about navigating the customer portal. New applicants – people who have not been enrolled in public benefits prior to the launch of the new system – can navigate the customer portal without a significant issue. Customers who had received benefits before the system transition have existing data that's been transferred into

the new system. When those customers log in for the first time, they are required to complete additional validations which admittedly can be time-consuming or potentially require assistance from DHS staff. *(An example of a validation measure is having to answer security questions when logging into your online checking account from a new computer.)* Customers will only have to go through this additional validation process one time. We are working with community partners to improve communications with customers about this process.

Below is the daily snapshot of several key application metrics as of COB yesterday which the governance team tracks on a daily basis. Today's data includes applications processed over the weekend. (Note: This is raw, preliminary, daily data and includes applications for all services supported by UHIP):

- 479 applications were submitted Tuesday (+119 compared to Monday)
- 256 applications were approved Tuesday (-78 compared to Monday)
- The application backlog as of COB Tuesday was 2,748 (+223 compared to Monday)

A reminder again for planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30 p.m. to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1 p.m. so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna

From: McCabe, Brenna (DOA)
Sent: Friday, October 28, 2016 10:21 AM
To: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Cc: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS) <Ashley.G.OShea@ohhs.ri.gov>
Subject: UHIP Update - Friday, October 28, 2016

Good morning –

Today's UHIP governance meeting touched on a number of topics, including:

- **Pending SNAP Applications Processed:** By end of the day today, all SNAP expedited applications pending more than seven days and all SNAP non-expedited applications pending more than 30 days will be processed. This is a significant milestone to remain in compliance with federal guidelines.
- **Yesterday's UHIP Worker Portal Outage:** During a daily routine check of the system at 7:30 a.m. yesterday, our team identified an issue with the worker portal's access to our backend servers. The team temporarily restricted access to the worker portal so it could fully identify and diagnose the issue. Access to the worker portal was restored by 11 a.m. yesterday. There was no significant impact on customer service, as staff at DHS field offices were able to assist customers using the customer portal. Our vendor resolved this issue and will run additional tests/maintenance over the weekend.
- **Weekly Media Availability Today:** The UHIP leadership team will hold its weekly media availability this afternoon at 1:30 p.m. at the Department of Administration's 2nd Floor Conference Room 2B. During the briefing, they will discuss **expectations for the start of HSRI open enrollment** and the **preparations for the system's November 1 activities**. As we've reported, there is typically an increase in call volume and additional traffic to the DHS field offices in the first days of each month, and we expect to see hold times and wait times increase next week.

Below is the daily snapshot of several key application metrics as of COB yesterday, which the governance team tracks on a daily basis. (Note: This is raw, preliminary, daily data and includes applications for all services supported by UHIP):

- 508 applications were submitted Thursday (-260 compared to Wednesday)
- 252 applications were approved Thursday (-264 compared to Wednesday)
- The number of pending applications as of COB Thursday was 9,266 (+256 compared to Wednesday).

[NOTE: As reported, there was a three-hour outage on the worker portal yesterday, which contributed to the down tick in the number of applications that were submitted into the system and approved.]

A reminder again for planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30 p.m. to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. **To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1 p.m. so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.**

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna

From: McCabe, Brenna (DOA)
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 10:07 AM
To: McCabe, Brenna (DOA) <Brenna.McCabe@doa.ri.gov>
Cc: OShea, Ashley G. (OHHS) <Ashley.G.OShea@ohhs.ri.gov>
Subject: UHIP Update -- Thursday, Oct. 27

Good morning –

Today's UHIP governance meeting touched on a number of topics, including:

- **System activities scheduled for today:** The system will start the process today to make the November 1 Rhode Island Works, SNAP and State Supplemental Payments (SSP). Customers can expect to receive payments as scheduled on November 1. For SSP, the system will send a remittance file to the bank today for direct deposit on November 1. A small percentage of SSP recipients receive a paper check. Those checks will be printed and mailed today and should be delivered prior to November 1.
- **UHIP Worker Portal Outage:** At 7:30 a.m. today, the worker portal reported an outage following the daily security check. The State and Deloitte are working to restore the worker portal as quickly as possible. Staff at the DHS field offices are able to assist customers through the customer portal. We do not anticipate any significant impact on customer service due to this outage.
- **Preparation for November 1 Activities:** On the first business day of each month, the system completes a number of significant activities, including processing all SNAP payments, state supplemental payments for SSI recipients, and Rhode Island Works payments. Additionally, as noted yesterday, November 1 is the first day of HealthSource RI's open enrollment period, which is likely to increase call volume and web traffic. In October, there were a number of issues identified on the first of the month, most of which were resolved in a matter of days. The team is preparing contingency plans should issues emerge again.

Below is the daily snapshot of several key application metrics as of COB yesterday which the governance team tracks on a daily basis. (Note: This is raw, preliminary, daily data and includes applications for all services supported by UHIP):

- 768 applications were submitted Wednesday (+289 compared to Tuesday)

- 506 applications were approved Wednesday (+250 compared to Tuesday)
- The number of pending applications (previously described as application backlog) as of COB Wednesday was 9,010 (+262 compared to Tuesday).

A reminder again for planning purposes, the UHIP communications team meets daily at 2:30 p.m. to review media inquiries with subject matter experts. To help us meet your afternoon deadlines, please try to provide any additional questions you have by 1 p.m. so we can gather the necessary information and respond as quickly as possible.

Thanks.

-Ashley and Brenna