



Executive Office of Health and Human Services
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Gary D. Alexander, *Secretary of Health and Human Services*

EOHHS WEB NEWSLETTER

November 2010

MODERNIZATION – *Streamlining Access and Reengineering Technology for Outcomes based Results*

Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services Launches Global Waiver Data Warehouse and Community Supports System

On March 22, of 2010, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services [EOHHS] reported the launching of the state's Health and Human Services Data Warehouse. A data warehouse is a repository of an organization's electronically stored data, designed to facilitate reporting and analysis. It includes business intelligence tools, tools to extract, transform and load data into the repository, and tools to manage and retrieve metadata and create reports. The need for a Data Warehouse arose from an EOHHS' need for reliable, consolidated, unique and integrated analysis and reporting of its data, at different levels of aggregation and the organization. The Data Warehouse integrates data from several important State data sources, such as client eligibility, claims, authorizations, and services covering a number of state programs. The Data Warehouse improves the state's ability to assimilate information from separate state systems with the data accessible from one location.

Secretary Alexander, commented that, "the Data Warehouse allows data across programs and agencies to be analyzed in a secure environment via a web browser, with access to accurate data in a user friendly format. The integration of program data provides analysis reports to more users including top management, middle managers, state analysts, and state caseworkers in real time. The Data Warehouse assimilates data to help the State integrate data from nine waiver programs into one Global Waiver." For the future, the Data Warehouse infrastructure's "plug-in" flexibility will allow more data sources to be added as required. The new infrastructure also provides the State with a modern data-reporting infrastructure for the future.

The Data Warehouse enables claims, encounters, and payments to be linked to assessments and service. It allows users to identify and help predict potential high cost cases, as well as enable better budget tracking and forecasting. The Warehouse also gives the State more information data to help re-balance the long-term care system between nursing homes and home & community based care. The EOHHS Data Warehouse provides an architectural model for the flow of data from the state's programs to assist in the decision making process. The benefits of the EOHHS Data Warehouse include the following:

- Provides a common data model for all data of interest regardless of the data's source making it easier to report and analyze information than it would be if multiple data models were used to retrieve information
- Identifies and resolves inconsistencies in data, simplifying reporting and analysis



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- Allows information in the warehouse to be stored safely for extended periods of time
- Provides data retrieval without slowing down operational systems
- In the future will work in conjunction with and enhance the value of operational business applications
- Facilitates decisions and provides policy makers with accurate data in real time

In addition to the Data Warehouse, a *Community Supports Management System* has also been implemented. This system provides a much-needed upgrade to the administrative processes in the State's Long Term Care offices. The Community Supports System transitions the paper-based application and care management processes to a more automated, web-based system. This also enables data sharing between different entities that provide services to Rhode Islanders who receive publicly funded long-term care services. This new process requires less paper, fewer phone calls and reduced faxing, and in just a few short months has resulted in better, timelier services to clients. State Long-Term Care staff now have the ability to send and receive information faster and data is much more accurate.

EOHHS Applies for Ford Foundation Modernization Grant to Continue Modernization Efforts for Economic Supports

Fourteen months ago EOHHS launched a Modernization Task Force co-chaired by Gary D. Alexander, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of RI Kids Count, and Linda Katz, from the RI Poverty Institute with the goal of reorganizing and revamping business processes and workflow, streamlining access to vital programs, and reengineering technology to assist families and individuals in need within the 5 health and human services agencies. To enhance these efforts, on November 1, 2010, EOHHS with the support of Governor Carcieri and a host of community organizations and leaders, applied for a \$ 3 million dollar grant from the Ford Foundation to enhance this work at the Department of Human Services. The Ford Foundation will notify applicants in January of 2011.

ACCESS TO BENEFITS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

With Rhode Island facing unprecedented demand for services by needy citizens, coupled with diminishing resources, the Secretary of EOHHS took steps to engage a wide range of partners to help EOHHS improve access to benefits by turning to technology and service coordination. For the past year, a Modernization Committee has been actively engaged in defining issues and opportunities in each of the human service agencies and has developed specific steps toward achieving effectiveness in the system of services.

Spearheaded by the Secretary of EOHHS, the Modernization Committee is co-chaired by the R.I. Poverty Institute and R.I. Kids Count, and has active representation from the state's Director of Information Technology, the Legislature, and state advocacy organizations



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whose representatives are all highly committed to streamlined and integrated programs. Agency heads, advocates, and other key staff meet regularly to discuss modernization efforts and to review progress towards improving benefits systems. Central to the work of the last year has been building a common understanding and framework across stakeholders of the strengths and challenges of integrating both within and across programs, and possible solutions.

At the same time, this commitment has been challenged by the lack of resources to maintain a consistent focus on the modernization work. While individual departments have succeeded in implementing some improvements, such as installing scanners and improved phone systems in the SNAP program, moving inter-department work forward has been affected by staff cutbacks while at the same time, trying to respond to growing needs in all programs.

The work of the Modernization Committee thus far has resulted in EOHHS being well positioned to elicit financial support from private foundations as evidenced by the fact that Rhode Island recently submitted a well defined application to the Ford Foundation which, if funded, will advance our efforts into a much needed technological system which maximizes resources and greatly improves access to needed benefits for those who face difficulty during these economic times.

ONGOING EFFORTS WITHIN DHS TO IMPROVE PROGRAM ACCESS FOR BENEFICIARIES:

- Streamlined SNAP Applications for Elderly
- Created an Auto-Recertification Process for SNAP households
- Built a technology “bridge” to allow CAP agency households to automatically apply for SNAP benefits without needing to come in to the agency
- Expanded categorical eligibility to ease documentation and eligibility determination of certain SNAP households who otherwise may not be eligible for services
- Expanded scanning project to all offices; significant changes are still needed to make scanning the method of handling essential documents and every effort will be taken to ensure this technology can reach its potential

2011 FUTURE DIRECTIONS WITHIN DHS:

- Implement Interactive Voice Response System to handle needs of DHS clientele
- Create a new imaging process center for statewide efficiencies
- Add bar-coding feature to handle the high volume of mail received by the agency
- Create a Call Center for improvement to problem-solving needs for clients
- Re-engineer service delivery system so that workers throughout are able to handle the workload of the agency with efficiency and effectiveness without carrying uneven and unmanageable caseloads



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- Medicaid Provider Website Enrollment – fully electronic enrollment process planned for Dec. 2010.
- 3 Additional Sources for Data Warehouse – planned for Dec. 2010.
- Global Waiver and MTA IT Planning Project – first planning deliverables to occur in Dec. 2010.
- Rite Resources - Bed/Slot Availability Website – planned for March 2011.

With the Modernization Committee's focused input, the efforts of DHS and EOHHS will continue to streamline and greatly improve services across agencies and programs.

Staff Development and Training Senior Leadership Program – Training Managers for the 21st Century

EOHHS recently announced the first ever Senior Leadership Program [SLP] for its management staff. The face of the Rhode Island State workforce is changing. The older generation is retiring and at the same time there is an increased mandate to sustain critical core health and human services, challenging agencies to focus on succession planning, knowledge management, and training current leaders and the next generation of leaders. The SLP will train all managers and prepare them in the core disciplines of government management, especially project management. Secretary Alexander, commented, "our managers need the tools to succeed and this certification, geared toward Rhode Island government management will enable them to perform more efficiently, timely and with greater precision." EOHHS asked the University of Rhode Island to prepare the curriculum and the certification.

CLASSES OFFERED AND UNDER DEVELOPMENT

- Project Management
- Negotiation and Mediation
- Organizational and Leadership Development
- Contract Management
- Communications
- Computer Technology Training
- Finance and Budgeting
- Rules and Regulations

The SLP began last spring with 15 managers receiving a certification in Project Management. Another class is currently underway.



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MEDICAID GLOBAL WAIVER

Nursing Home Transition and Diversion

One of the main goals of Rhode Island's Global Medicaid Waiver is to rebalance the long term care system and focus on home and community based alternatives. In 18 short months, the Office of Community Programs at the Department of Human Services has successfully transitioned from nursing homes or diverted from entering nursing homes approximately 1000 beneficiaries. The primary goal of rebalancing the system is to promote independence, dignity, and choice for seniors. We have been achieving great success in this area and we look forward to enhancing this program moving forward." In SFY, \$12 million dollars was saved because of these efforts.

In addition to the success of the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Program, other achievements in the Long Term Care arena to enhance home and community based care have been accomplished or are underway:

- New levels of care implemented for Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports. These new levels of care address functional needs and not institutional levels of care
- Revised nursing home payment methodology to include an adjustment for patient acuity
- Implemented Shared Living – new model for community-based alternatives
- Increased rates to Program for All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) provider. PACE is a comprehensive, coordinated primary, acute, and long-term care program.

In the near future, DHS will:

- Increase rates to Assisted Living
- Incentivize Home Health to provide more nights and weekend services
- Increase rates to Adult Day Care
- Partner with Medicare on the provision of medical homes to dual-eligibles
- Revise payment methodologies for transportation

New Hospital Payment Methodology Implemented

As part of the Medicaid Global Waiver, the state is seeking to reform and revise its payment methodologies across the board. DHS recently crafted and implemented a new payment methodology for hospitals called the All Patient Refined Diagnostic Related Groups [APR-DRG]. This replaces the old cost-based structure. Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs) are a



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patient classification scheme, which provides a means of relating the type of patients a hospital treats (i.e., its case mix) to the costs incurred by the hospital.

Re-procurement of Managed Care Contracts

One of the key components of the Medicaid Global Waiver is Smart Purchasing. DHS recently implemented a successful re-procurement of Medicaid managed care organizations for children and families and adults with physical disabilities. This re-procurement seeks to enhance and support the development of patient centered medical homes, provide greater wellness and prevention measures and is slated to save the state millions of dollars in health care costs.

Costs Not Otherwise Matchable [CNOM]

Another key component of the Medicaid Global Waiver, is the flexibility to draw down new federal revenue over the five year life of the waiver. In specific, it allows the state to obtain federal matching funds to support the continuation of state-funded programs that serve populations at risk for Medicaid and/or high cost institutional care. As of October 1, 2010, RI has already received close to \$20 million of this new federal money that is replacing current general revenue expenditures. But for the waiver, the state would have to cut these necessary programs and services.

Emphasis on Program Integrity

The Medicaid Global Waiver puts a special emphasis on Program Integrity and ensuring that tax dollars are spent wisely. In SFY 2010, the \$6.3 million dollars were saved by optimizing third party liability, reviewing emergency department visits, enhanced estate recoveries, tax intercepts, maximizing Medicare and redesigning components of the state's eligibility systems to enhance claiming opportunities. The goal is to ensure all parties pay the appropriate share of Medicaid costs by strengthening program integrity efforts including TPL recoupment, recoveries and collections.

EOHHS is planning a statewide Medicaid Provider audit in the current year.

New Online Videos on Long Term Care Services for Elders & Adults with Disabilities

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) announced that the agency has produced three educational videos on long-term care services in Rhode Island and also one video on the Medicaid Global Waiver. The videos were produced with grant funding



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from the federal government to promote home and community-based services for individuals that want to live independently but require help to be able to live at home or in the community safely. The videos are available online.

During the past year and a half, Rhode Island, through the EOHHS, has partnered with many community organizations, providers, advocates, and others to reform long-term care services in Rhode Island by increasing access to and information on home and community-based services.

“We are pleased to present these educational videos to better inform people about the choices and options they have,” said Gary Alexander, Secretary of EOHHS. “People may not be aware of the many different kinds of services that there are that can help them while they live at home.”

There is one video specifically for elders and one for adults with disabilities. The Department of Elderly Affairs and The Point/211 also provide information for individuals looking for home and community-based services. One video was developed for Discharge Planners at hospitals and another is an overview of the Medicaid Global Waiver and Medicaid Reform in Rhode Island.

The videos are all approximately 15 minutes in length and are available at the following websites: the Executive Office of Health and Human Services www.ohhs.ri.gov, the Department of Elderly Affairs www.dea.ri.gov, the Department of Human Services www.dhs.ri.gov and the Point at <http://adrc.ohhs.ri.gov>

NURTRITIONAL SERVICES

DHS Receives Performance Bonus for Excellence in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The United States Department of Agriculture announced that the Rhode Island Department of Human Services has received a \$501,701 high performance bonus award for excellence in the administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] formerly known as “Food Stamps.”

Rhode Island is among the states with the most improved Program Access Index [PAI] for Fiscal-Year 2009. In general, the PAI is a simple index of the average monthly number of SNAP participants over the course of a calendar year to the number of people with income below 125 percent of the official poverty line in each State. This award, in the amount of \$501,701 was in recognition of Rhode Island’s improvement to Program Access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) Program.

State Health and Human Services Secretary Gary Alexander said, “For thousands of Rhode Islanders, hunger is a chronic problem with many serious consequences. This is particularly



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true for children and mothers—hunger impedes healthy growth and development, is a significant predictor of serious health problems, and is associated with behavioral and emotional problems among preschoolers and school-age children. Many senior citizens also grapple with the harmful effects of food insecurity. This shows that Rhode Island is serious about eradicating hunger and providing nutrition and that we actively engaged in finding solutions to the hunger problem.” Alexander added, “my management team at the Department of Human Services [DHS] led by Donalda Carlson, Associate Director, Nancy Pellegrino, Food Stamp Administrator and Denise Tatro, Field Administrator effectuated the reengineering to make this possible but more importantly this award belongs to the DHS staff who work hard each and every day to deliver these benefits to the citizens of Rhode Island who need them. It is because of their efforts that our most vulnerable population, especially in this economy are served”.

The State plans to utilize the funds from this excellence award to continue to improve technology and access. There are approximately 149,000 recipients receiving SNAP in Rhode Island.

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

Technology Updates at the state’s Child Support Services Offices

An electronic debit card, called Kids Card, was implemented for custodial parents to receive timely child support payments. A new Interactive Voice Response System will be implemented on November 22, 2010 and will include the Child Support Services (CSS) information. There’s also a new payment processing unit to ensure child support payments are posted and imaged by the date of receipt through a unique partnership with the State of CT CSS will also participate in the DHS Data Warehouse to generate information and reports for targeted case processing. Other tools that are used include: Lexis Nexis, a locator tool, to better locate noncustodial parents; Electronic data matching to determine private health coverage for children receiving Rite Care; Automated case processing for the Courts; Automated enforcement of past due support through drivers license suspension, lottery intercept, bank liens, real estate liens, insurance intercept, tax refund intercept, and credit bureau reporting.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

First Statewide Veterans Newspaper Published

The State Division of Veterans Affairs recently published the first veterans statewide newspaper called the *Sentinel*. The *Sentinel* is a tabloid styled newspaper geared toward informing veterans and the state at large about news concerning veterans. Its goal is to bring greater cohesiveness to veterans organizations around the state. The second edition of the



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Sentinel is scheduled for publication in November of 2010. The first edition can be viewed on the EOHHS website:

http://www.ohhs.ri.gov/documents/documents10/ri_vets_sentinel_5_10.pdf

**Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services' To Host
Rhode Island Veterans Summit**

**Secretary Alexander to Unveil Plans for the New State Department of Veterans
Affairs and Discuss Important Issues Facing Veterans**

The Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services [EOHHS] will host a Veterans Summit at the Rhode Island Veterans Home in Bristol, RI on December 15, 2010 from 9am to 2pm to unveil the new design for a Rhode Island Department of Veterans Affairs [DVA], and will bring together Federal, State and community agencies to discuss plans to improve housing, employment and health care services for veterans. EOHHS Secretary of Health and Human Services, Gary D. Alexander, who has made Veterans a top priority for 2011, commented that “all Veterans, especially those with disabilities, must have access to needed health care services, housing and employment. In order to ensure that these services are available to veterans of all eras, the state must invest in the new State Veterans Department. I am proud of the work that we have accomplished, but much more needs to be done. Veterans are our number one priority.”