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March 22, 2011

Galina Krivoruk
Governor's Office of Information Technology
601 East 18th, Avenue, Suite 250
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Ms. Krivoruk,

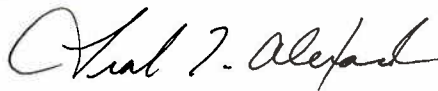
On behalf of the Colorado Human Services Directors Association (CHSDA), I would like to share concerns gathered from Human Services Departments around the state relating to the new CHATS system. CHSDA is an association representing the social/human services directors from Colorado's counties. While we understand that any new system will inevitably have its challenges as it rolls out, we believe it is important to share the experiences of users in county Human Services Departments and to look for solutions to some of the challenges which have arisen.

Since the new CHATS system rolled out at the end of 2010, counties have experienced a number of issues with its implementation. In particular, Human Services Directors report that their accounting departments have experienced significant burdens in rolling out the new system.

I am attaching a white paper, which includes a list of concerns gathered from around the state for your review. CHSDA would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the State and with other key stakeholders to improve the system.

Thank you for taking the time to review these concerns. Please feel free to contact me if you need any clarification or additional information.

Sincerely,



Frank Alexander
President

CC: Reggie Bicha, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Human Services
Kristin Russell, Secretary of Technology and State Chief Information Officer

Child Care Automated Tracking System (CHATS) Issues

March 10, 2011

Background:

The rollout of the new Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) computer system, CHATS (Child Care Automated Tracking System) during the last half of calendar year 2010 has resulted in numerous operational problems for counties, providers and parents.

This document summarizes many of the issues experienced daily by counties and providers since the implementation of New CHATS. Data from a number of counties has been gathered during the past two months and detailed to quantify specific types of issues being experienced for help in identifying potential solutions.

Although the individual examples are available at the detail level, they have been categorized under three main areas:

1. Provider Payment Issues
2. Communication
3. Eligibility Issues

Discussion:

Some of the key issues have been listed under each of the main areas for clarification.

1. Provider Payment Issues: Payment issues encompass all aspects of the program area. Authorizations/parental fees/fiscal rates/care levels all have a direct impact on the payments. A partial listing of known issues on provider payments follows:

- 1.1 Parental Fees. Different parental fee amounts show up on different screens making it difficult to reconcile payments for providers and business office staff.
- 1.2 Parental Fee changes made in CHATS will remain for only one month. After that, the fee amount automatically reverts back to the fee amount set prior to the last change. This condition has a fiscal impact on counties.
- 1.3 Unable to assess a parent fee if less than 15 days out, even when the adult caretaker has received prior notice of the parent fee amount and this fee should be continuous. This condition has a fiscal impact on counties.
- 1.4 Care levels: Known issue in CHATS that care levels have been reverting back to when a change is made to the child care request window. This will result in school age children being paid zero through the swipes and manual payments must be done by the provider. Slated for a fix in the next CHATS Release 2.1 in mid-April. But there are also other unknown reasons why the care level is end-dating itself or reverting back.
- 1.5 Tiered rates can still not be updated when a change occurs so providers are being reimbursed the incorrect daily rate.

- 1.6 Multiple payments are being made for the same day on the same child because EPPIC is not reading CHATS authorizations correctly.
 - 1.7 Processing manual claims and resolving payment issues/questions is taking hours of staff time when these issues used to take only minutes.
- 2. Communication:** There is a need for timely and concise information to be distributed from the State CCCAP staff to the counties.
- 2.1 Some counties are aware of workarounds and some counties are not. Utilizing the email distribution list would ensure every county is getting the same message at the same time.
 - 2.2 Lack of CHATS Report availability. There are 44 reports in CHATS with only 17 currently available. Five additional reports are slated for the 2.1 release which will leave 22 reports with known defects. This severely hampers the counties from doing fiscal projections and administering their allocation. Reports indicated as 'By Request' are not being provided timely when requested.
 - 2.3 Remittance Statements. Currently remittance statements are cumbersome and difficult to decipher. Remittance statements are not batched by individual counties. The Remittance statement may have one county's address on the top of the payment summary but multiple counties' payments/children may be represented on the statement. The mailing of Payment Notices is costing Counties upwards of four times as much paper and 2 – 3 times more postage than prior to conversion. The payment summaries do not contain all payment information e.g. some children are missing and recoveries and manual claims are not contained on the statement. They are duplicative as all counties are producing the same payment summary.
 - 2.4 Providers are having problems knowing exactly what to bill because of missing payment summaries, absences that paid incorrectly, parent fee confusion and difficulty in deciphering payment summaries when they do receive them.
 - 2.5 Being unable to view attendance records past 60 days is severely hampering quality control processes and audit compliance. Requests for this data via a Help Desk Ticket are going unanswered.
 - 2.6 Help Desk Issues. Communication of known problem areas and tickets being referred to an entity like the Change Control Board (CCB) would decrease Help Desk Tickets being submitted for the same problem numerous times. Communicate "Known Issues" to all Counties as soon as they are identified to alleviate backlog of Help Desk ticket and emails from County staff to State, etc.
 - 2.7 Request to convene a group of representatives from Counties, State, Providers to prioritize issues, develop joint solutions to issues, etc.
- 3. Eligibility Issues:** Increases in case work processing time may cause delays in determining eligibility.
- 3.1 The waitlist is in order of data entry date instead of date of application making it the counties' responsibility to track manually.

- 3.2 SIDMOD errors prevent staff from completing authorizations in a timely manner. This impacts providers from being paid via swipes and must bill manually. This also impacts the business office staff that then processes the payments manually.
- 3.3 Swipe cards not working at POS sites even though valid authorizations are in place.
- 3.4 Client's are still not well trained on POS usage which continues to be burdensome to counties and providers causing increased workload on the eligibility and business office staff.

Conclusions:

The above summarized list of issues with New CHATS was not anticipated during the development phase of the project. Now that the realities of how the system is working in production are being felt by the state, counties, providers and parents, an effort to restore stability to operations must be made.

Further, the counties are requesting that the state fix the problems that are interfering with entering cases, getting them authorized, ensuring that the POS devices are working correctly and paying providers correctly and timely before any new functionality is added to the system.

These problems have been captured in the CHATS Help Desk Ticket report, dated February 22, 2011. In this report, 247 issues out of 676 have been identified by the State that the "issue described is a defect." Fixing these known issues should be given the highest priority.

The current issues have cost Counties tremendously in resources including staff time, postage, paper, toner, and technical assistance and cannot continue to be sustained.