

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Social Services
Office of the Commissioner
7 N. 8th St.
Richmond, VA 23219**

Commissioner's Memo No. 007

DATE: January 16, 2008
TO: Directors of Local Departments of Social Services
FROM: Anthony Conyers Jr.

Directors,

Following are the topics contained in this Memorandum:

- [Cost Allocation Plan Update](#)
- [Earned Income Tax Credit mailer](#)
- [Judicial Performance Evaluation Program](#)
- [Forms Process Improvement](#)
- [Annual Statistical Report](#)
- [Faith-Based Update](#)

Cost Allocation Plan Update

Last week, VDSS received a letter from Department of Health & Human Services Division of Cost Allocation (DCA) requesting additional information regarding our Public Assistance Cost Allocation Plan (PACAP). Many of the issues raised have been dealt with in subsequent PACAP Amendments.

However, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region Office III reviewed the PACAP and has indicated that "DSS must perform an implementation review of PACAP procedures for the year ending June 30, 2008 that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- DSS must review a statistically valid sample of supporting data for recipients identified in the RMS for the year ending June 30, 2008, to assure that the system is administered effectively and the results are valid.
- DSS must provide a certification that its monitored counties and independent cities to assure that the invalid 876 procedures are no longer utilized. DSS must provide a list of counties and independent cities that were reviewed during this period, any significant results, and related corrective actions.

- DSS must provide a certification that it monitored and tested invoices from counties and independent cities to assure administrative costs claimed are allowable and in accordance with plan provisions. DSS must provide a list of counties and independent cities that were reviewed during this period, any significant results, and related corrective actions.

Reports and certifications must be submitted to ACF for review no later than September 30, 2008.”

To ensure our PACAP is in compliance, VDSS will be reviewing RMS results down to the case file level. RMS Observation Reviews will start in the next few weeks on a limited basis and then be expanded to include all localities. You will be contacted as to the specifics of the review for your locality. Please review your RMS Observation Forms to ensure they are complete. If the selected program/activity combination is case specific, ensure that the case file supports this combination. These guidelines are outlined in the [RMS Instructions](#).

Since budget line 876 has been eliminated, we think we can make an adequate case regarding this issue. However, some field work may be necessary to ensure we have achieved the intended purpose by the elimination of this budget line.

We will also be testing local administrative costs to ensure these costs are allowable. Our primary approach in this area will be based on the Local Review Team, but we may request assistance from others to ensure we cover the waterfront.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Hundreds of DSS clients could have been eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), based on their 2006 earnings. Either unaware of this eligibility, or choosing not to file taxes, Virginians left thousands of federal dollars unclaimed. VDSS' research department has created a database of these clients, and a direct mail notification will be sent to each household encouraging the recipient to determine his or her EITC eligibility. As the mailer will also state, people may call 1-800-906-9887 for the free tax preparation site closest to them.

The database can be broken down by FIPS code. If you would like a list of the clients in your locality, please contact Peggy Friedenber, EITC Project Coordinator with VDSS at (804) 726-7371 or margaret.friedenberg@dss.virginia.gov.

The EITC has no effect on certain welfare benefits. In most cases, EITC payments will not be used to determine eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, low-income housing or most TANF payments.

The EITC refunds up to \$4,716, and is considered a “refundable” credit, which means that eligible filers receive a refund check even if they were not required to pay any federal income tax. Even if an individual only made \$1 last year, he or she could get money back.

The [EITC Assistant](#) is an eligibility screening tool and is available in English and Spanish. For forms, publications, brochures and other EITC related materials visit the [Internal Revenue Service’s website](#) for downloadable information.

Judicial Performance Evaluation Program

The Supreme Court of Virginia has created a Judicial Performance Evaluation (JPE) Program as required by [§17.1-100](#) of the Code of Virginia. The purpose of the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program is to provide an internal self-improvement mechanism for judges and to be a source of information for the re-election process.

Social workers are an important part of this Judicial Performance Evaluation Program. As observers of Virginia’s judges in juvenile and domestic relations district courts and circuit courts, the JPE Program would like to know their assessment of judicial performance in Virginia’s juvenile and domestic relations district courts and circuit courts.

For the evaluations to be as meaningful as possible, it is vital that all social workers, all CPS workers, and all foster care workers who have appeared before an evaluated judge be given the opportunity to assess that judge. The JPE Program will need your help in identifying these individuals. The JPE Program will be contacting each director of the local department of social services to obtain a list of names of all social workers appearing before a specifically named judge. As directors, your support is critical to the success of this program. I encourage your cooperation and appreciate it. It is in the best interest of the people we serve to provide this information so that we may make good court experiences better.

2008 Annual Statistical Report

[Broadcast 4699](#) announced the publication of the 2008 Annual Statistical Report. For most programs, the report shows statewide caseload and expenditures data for the past 11 state fiscal years, from 1997 through 2007.

The online version (left rail: Reports on SPARK and www.dss.virginia.gov) has improved features for readability, including a hyperlinked table of contents. The report is organized by major program areas, including benefit programs, family

services, child care, licensing, community and volunteer services, and child support enforcement.

Faith-Based Update

From your vantage point as leaders, you see, more than anyone, that DSS can't go it alone. Petersburg DSS recently hosted a well-attended "Best Practices" meeting with the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) Advisory Council. A series of these meetings is planned, with the next one scheduled in March on the Eastern Shore.

The dialogue is helping us determine:

- the unmet human service needs in particular localities, by priority
- what resources can be pooled to address these
- which organizations are finding some success, and how
- who else can help

It was a fruitful conversation, with clergy and community leaders from Petersburg, Hopewell, Dinwiddie and Prince George providing key insights about their particular congregations and constituency. The Faith-Based and Community Initiative is a critical one of the division of community and volunteer services; the potential for providing and receiving support on behalf of our clients is great. I am eager to continue these discussions around the state, and look forward to hearing your suggestions and those of the clergy within your communities.

Forms Process Improvement

Please share this good news with your administrative staff: Effective October 1, 2007, Local Departments of Social Services will no longer be billed for forms by the Central Office! This change should reduce the administrative work for all of us. As we have made more forms available electronically, the volume of paper forms required has significantly decreased. We will continue to make additional forms available electronically as opportunities arise. There is a modest fiscal impact of this change, as \$146,000 was billed to LDSS for forms during fiscal year 2007.

Thank you for your attention. For your convenience, these memoranda can also be found at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/division/co/memos.cgi>

AC/VDSS

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SECTION NUMBER: 11

SECTION TITLE: Random Moment Sampling

DCA APPROVED EFFECTIVE DATE:

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (VDSS)

Random Moment Sampling 2008

**Observers and Workers Instructions for Completing the
Random Moment Sampling Observation Form**

Purpose

The Random Moment Sampling (RMS) Observation Form is used to document the specific program and activity a worker is engaged in at a randomly selected moment in time. The information reported on the RMS Observation Form is used to determine how various programs will be funded with Local, State, and Federal dollars. The RMS process allows localities to identify and allocate activities carried out by its service and benefit workers without keeping minute-by-minute records of activities during the day.

The RMS approach, when combined with subsequent statistical analysis, satisfies public accountability requirements in an extremely efficient manner. However, the adequacy of the system to draw down available federal funds to finance these programs is critically dependent on the willingness and ability of each staff person to accurately identify the work he or she is performing at the selected observation moment. It is essential everyone follow the instructions closely.

***THIS IS NOT A DEVICE FOR EVALUATING THE PERFORMANCE OF
INDIVIDUAL WORKERS OR LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES***

Responsibilities of the Local RMS Coordinator

The definitions that describe what activities the federal government will fund do not always correspond well with the terms and concepts by which workers describe their work. Nor do the federal definitions necessarily coincide exactly with categories and definitions which VDSS requires for its own accounting purposes. Consequently, it is important that workers have a clear understanding of the concepts and definitions used in the RMS process.

Each Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) must participate in the RMS process, which will then be used to collectively and statistically allocate costs to the federal government.

Each locality must designate at least one RMS Coordinator to administer the RMS process in the locality. At least one alternate must be identified to perform in the Coordinator's absence. Each locality determines how many additional alternates will be needed based on the location of the sample population, available staff time, or other pertinent factors.

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The responsibilities of the RMS Coordinator include, but are not limited to the following:

- Acts as the liaison for communications with the locality's staff and the VDSS RMS Administrator;
- Coordinates the receipt of RMS Observation Forms to be distributed to RMS Observer(s) for completion. Monitors and collects returned RMS Observation Forms. This specifically refers to the distribution and collection of randomly assigned forms and the retention of completed forms;
- Assures that selected individuals have been personally contacted to promote sampling accuracy, form completion and quality control for all forms distributed within the period;
- Assures that on a weekly basis the sample results, *including case number and client's name where applicable*, have been entered into the computer system. RMS Observation Forms will be reviewed by VDSS and other cognizant federal agency staff to assure program/activity combinations documented on the RMS Observation Form were provided for an eligible client; and
- Coordinates with the LDSS Office Manager, LETS Coordinator or other staff to assure that employees are accurately recorded and reported for inclusion or exclusion in the RMS process.

Responsibilities of the Local RMS Observer

Each locality must designate a RMS Observer and an Alternate RMS Observer who is responsible for the actual completion of RMS Observation Forms for the selected sample moments. The Alternate RMS Observer will assure continuation of the RMS process in the RMS Observer's absence. Each locality determines how many additional Alternates are needed based on the location of the sample population, the size of the sample, available staff time, or other pertinent factors. In some localities, the RMS Coordinator and the RMS Observer may be the same person. Again, each locality must determine the most practical approach to administering RMS in its particular location.

The responsibilities of the RMS Observer include, but are not limited to the following:

- Acts as the liaison for communications with the locality's RMS Coordinator;
- Contacts the worker directly at the specified time to complete the randomly assigned RMS Observation Forms, then returns the completed form for data entry;
- Ensures sampling accuracy, observation completion, and prompt completion; and

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- Ensures the RMS Observation Forms are completed and returned to the local RMS Coordinator.

General Instructions

Periodically each participant in the RMS population will be approached by a RMS Observer. The designated RMS Observer will ask the worker to identify his/her activity at that moment according to the program and activity definitions, which should be accessible. A descriptive list of program and activity areas is included in these instructions to assist RMS Observers and workers in completing the RMS Observation Form. The worker indicates the program and code for the activity which most appropriately reflects the worker's action at that moment. The RMS Observer completes the RMS Observation Form during the interview and both the direct worker and Observer sign the RMS Certification Page. **Only one selection must be made, as each Program has a corresponding appropriate Activity.**

Overview of the RMS Certification Page

The RMS Certification Page is divided into four major sections.

1. **IDENTIFICATION DATA**

The top portion of the RMS Certification Page is preprinted by VDSS and does not need any data entry or selections. This portion of the form provides the RMS Coordinator/Observer with the position information and the date and time necessary to conduct the RMS observation.

2. **CASE INFORMATION/DOCUMENTATION**

If the direct worker's activity at his/her sampled moment is related to a specific client, the client's name and case number need to be included on the form (only the case number is required for CPS and APS cases due to the investigative and confidentiality nature of the files.) All case information will remain confidential. The client's name and case number are needed to validate the activity, benefiting program and existence of a client. For audit and review purposes, select the case number associated with the client wherever the documentation for the program and activity combination will reside.

Without the client's case number included on the RMS Observation Form, it is nearly impossible for a third party to validate that the services were actually provided, or that the services were provided to an eligible beneficiary.

EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION NEEDED TO SUPPORT RMS OBSERVATIONS

As an example, on May 5th a social worker is observed entering progress notes into the system for a May 3rd home visit. The social worker should denote – “keyed on May 5th,” as part of the progress notes. By adding the “keyed on date” along with the client's case name and case number

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on the RMS Observation Form, should create adequate documentation in the file to substantiate the program/activity combination.

If an activity relates to a specific program but because of the nature of the activity, a client's case number and name does not exist, it is ***recommended*** that notes are added to the RMS Observation Form to help substantiate/document the program/activity combination's validity. Some examples of this would be: training (provide name of course being trained), recruitment activities (provide the type of activity, i.e. making brochures for recruitment booth at the Home Schooling convention), and employee not scheduled to work (list the standard working hours for this employee).

If an auditor needs to validate a RMS observation where it was selected that the direct worker was on leave at the time of the observation, time and attendance records maintained by the local agency can be used to validate this selection.

Please note that it is unnecessary to make a copy of the RMS Observation Form and insert the copy into the case file. Making a copy of the RMS Observation Form and placing it in the file only documents that a RMS observation was completed, it does not create adequate support to validate the benefiting program/activity combination.

3. PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY COMBINATION (Circle only ONE Activity under ONE Program)

At the specified moment of the observation, using the RMS Observation Form, identify what Program is benefiting from the direct worker's efforts at the time of the observation and circle the corresponding Program Code. Next, CIRCLE the ONE Activity Code listed under the benefiting Program that best describes the activity being done at the selected moment. If the benefiting Program cannot be determined, then select Non Client Specific (Program Code 800), utilizing the appropriate Activity Code. This Program/Activity combination is to be entered on the Certification Page.

If the direct worker cannot be located or reached at the specific moment, the RMS Observer is instructed to leave a note or phone message at the worker's assigned work space. The interview should be completed as soon as possible following the worker's return. This procedure is also used when the individual is with a client and cannot be interrupted at the designed moment. If the interview is done over the phone, only the RMS Observer would need to sign and date the certification form.

When the RMS Observer and/or Worker signs and dates the RMS Certification Page, the date and time recorded should be the date and time that the observation/interview was finalized.

4. SUBMISSION OF RMS OBSERVATION FORMS

On a weekly basis, the RMS Observer should send the completed forms to the RMS Coordinator who, in turn, within a week will key the observations into the computer system. After entering the

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completed observation into the computer system (including case number and client name where applicable) the processed RMS Observation Forms should be filed by applicable quarter then by Control Number order.

Program Areas

On the RMS Observation Form locate the Program area that is benefiting by your Activity at the specified RMS observation time (see RMS Certification page for specific date and time). Definitions for the Program areas follow:

- 100 **Medicaid - Adult:** This program code is used for adult only cases. This program code includes activities that contribute to making the determination or the redetermination of eligibility or interim changes for Medicaid; preparing or processing forms; entering relevant information into the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), MedPend, ADAPT (Application Benefit Delivery Automation Project) and other automated systems; collecting information from the client, authorized representative or others which is used in the determination of eligibility, such as social security numbers, citizenship and identity documentation; providing information about Medicaid-related programs such as managed care to clients, verifying eligibility information; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; querying systems, records and other staff for current placement status (e.g., adult care residence, nursing facility); preparing for and participating in fair hearings and appeals for Medicaid; providing eligibility related forms, referral to medical services and information to caretakers or caseworkers applying on behalf of others; participating in training and remaining current on changes in Medicaid eligibility policies; and traveling to locations (including transportation of clients) associated with the above activities. This program also includes all activities involved in finding an applicant “ineligible” for Medicaid, which may then lead to a decision to refer to other programs (i.e. SLH).
- 110 **Food Stamps:** This program code includes activities contributing to making the determination or the redetermination of eligibility or interim changes for Food Stamps; preparing or processing forms; collecting information from family or others; accessing IEVS (Income Eligibility Verification System) to verify case information; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; entering relevant information into ADAPT and other automated systems; preparing for and participating in fraud investigations; preparing for and participating in fair hearings and appeals and; traveling to locations associated with the above activities; and all activities related to Electronic Benefits Tracking process.
- 130 **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) - (Benefits):** This program code includes activities contributing to making the determination or re-determination of eligibility or interim changes for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (this program replaced AFDC); determining the exemption(s) for employment programs; preparing or processing forms; collecting information from family or others which is used in the determination of resources, such as social security numbers, birth certifications; verifying eligibility information; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; entering relevant information into automated systems; querying systems, records and other staff; preparing for and participating in fair hearings and appeals for TANF; preparing for and participating in fraud investigations; providing eligibility related forms

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and information to parent(s), caretakers or caseworkers applying on behalf of others; and traveling to locations associated with the above activities.

- 140 Refugee: This program code includes activities contributing to making the determination or redetermination of eligibility or interim changes for Refugee programs; preparing or processing forms; collecting information from family or others which is used in the determination of resources, such as social security numbers, birth certifications; verifying eligibility information; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; entering relevant information into automated systems; querying systems, records and other staff; preparing for and participating in fair hearings and appeals for Refugee programs; providing eligibility related forms and information to parent(s), caretakers or caseworkers applying on behalf of others; and traveling to locations associated with the above activities.
- 150 Auxiliary Grants: This program code includes activities contributing to making the determination or redetermination of eligibility or interim changes for Auxiliary Grants (AG) to aged, disabled, or blind clients eligible for grant support; preparing or processing forms; entering relevant information into automated systems; collecting information from family or others which is used in the determination of resources, such as social security numbers, birth certifications; verifying eligibility information; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; querying systems, records and other staff; preparing for and participating in fair hearings and appeals for Auxiliary Grants; providing eligibility related forms and information to parent(s), caretakers or caseworkers applying on behalf of others; and traveling to locations associated with the above activities.
- 160 General Relief: This program code includes activities contributing to making the determination or redetermination or interim changes of General Relief (GR) services and/or cash assistance to individuals or families eligible for General Relief; preparing or processing forms; collecting information from family or others which is used in the determination of resources, such as social security numbers, birth certifications; verifying eligibility information; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; entering relevant information into automated systems; querying systems, records and other staff; providing eligibility related forms and information to parent(s), caretakers or caseworkers applying on behalf of others; traveling to locations associated with the above activities.
- 170 State/Local Hospitalization: This program code includes activities in making the determination of applicant's eligibility for reimbursement of State/Local funded hospitalization services; interim changes, and redetermination of eligibility; preparing or processing forms; collecting information from family or others which is used in the determination of resources, such as social security numbers, birth certifications; verifying eligibility information; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; entering relevant information into automated systems; querying systems, records and other staff; preparing for and participating in fair hearings and appeals for State/Local Hospitalization program; providing eligibility related forms and information to parent(s), caretakers or caseworkers applying on behalf of others; and traveling to locations associated with the above activities.

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- 180 Medicaid/SCHIP Family & Children: This program code includes activities designed to enable low-income families whose children receive medical services under LIFC (Low Income Families with Children), FAMIS Plus (Medicaid for children), FAMIS (medical services for low-income families whose children are not recipients of Medicaid), FAMIS MOMS (pregnant women who receive medical services) and Medicaid covered pregnant women. If you are working with a family at the specified time of your observation, determine the primary client that you are working with in the family before selecting either Medicaid Family & Children (Program Code 180) or Medicaid - Adult (Program Code 100). Ensure that the case number and client name recorded on your RMS Observation Certification page corresponds with your determination. ***This program should only be used for a family-based case, Medicaid covered pregnant women and pregnant women being evaluated for FAMIS MOMS. All work with other adults should be charged to Medicaid-Adult (Program Code 100).***

This program code includes activities such as initial contact, interim changes, and subsequent reviews; preparing forms and collecting information from the parent, authorized representative, guardian or others to be used in the determination of LIFC Medicaid, FAMIS Plus, FAMIS and FAMIS MOMS eligibility; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; entering relevant information into automated systems, as well as communicating information to the centralized FAMIS CPU Unit; querying systems, records and other staff; preparing for and participating in fair hearings and appeals, and providing eligibility-related forms and information to parent(s), caretakers, or caseworkers applying for benefits on behalf of others.

- 190 Energy Assistance: This program code includes activities contributing to making the determination of eligibility for Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) and fuel crisis assistance: preparing or processing forms; collecting information from family or others which is used in the determination of resources; filling out and processing associated eligibility forms; querying systems, records and other staff; providing eligibility related forms and information to individuals applying on behalf of others; working with vendors; and traveling to locations associated with the above activities.
- 200 Employment Services (VIEW): This program code includes activities to a Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) participant. Activity Code 600 is designated for employment-related activities when other codes are not applicable. If the worker is providing a client administrative assistance with child care services when an RMS Observation is completed, use Program Code 220 – Child Care as the program for child care-related activities.
- 210 Food Stamps Employment & Training: This program code includes employment and training activities to a Food Stamp client. Activity Code 600 is designated for most employment-related activities. If the worker is providing a client administrative assistance with child care services when an RMS Observation is completed, use Program Code 220 – Child Care as the program for child care-related activities.
- 220 Child Care: This program code includes activities for coordinating child care for a case when child care services are needed, except when it is related to child care for foster children. If the client is a foster parent, select Program Code 310 – Foster Care. This program code is used only

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when the client is not receiving child care services under the Foster Care program. This code is used for any activity associated with approving or monitoring a child care provider.

- 310 Foster Care: This program code includes activities provided to a child(ren) and family (families) preparing for or in a foster family home, group home, emergency shelter, residential facility or any other foster care facility licensed or approved for a child. ***This program includes entering relevant information into automated systems and activities that contribute to making the determination of whether or not a child who was removed from his/her home is eligible, or continues to be eligible, for participating in the Title IV-E Foster Care program (Activity Code 400).*** This code is used for Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) activities related to agency foster care/adoption. This program also includes workers efforts while participating in CSA-related activities on behalf of foster or adopted children and includes activities related to preparing and participating in the FAPT, CPMT and other related team meetings. This code is not used for Adult Foster Care; refer to Program Code 350 – Adult Services/Adult Protective Services.
- 320 Adoption: This program code includes activities provided to children who need permanent families, birth parents who are unable to parent their children and adoptive parents who want to provide a home for a child not born to them. Activities are provided to children whose adoption has been finalized and whose adoption is in progress. This program includes entering relevant information into automated systems. This code should be used whenever the worker is performing any activity that contributes to making the determination of whether or not a child who was removed from his/her home is eligible, or continues to be eligible for participating in the title IV-E Adoption Assistance program (Activity Code 400).
- 350 Adult Services/Adult Protective Services (APS): This program code includes activities related to the investigation of reports that an adult was or is suspected of being abused, neglected or exploited (select Activity Code 425). It also includes activities where intervention is needed primarily to maintain and monitor ongoing supportive services to promote self-sufficiency. Supportive services include, but are not limited to, home-based services, adult day care alternate living arrangements, adult foster homes and/or other adult program activities.
- 360 Other Child Welfare Services (Child Not Currently in Foster Care): This program code should be selected when performing activities for a child in his/her home. These administrative activities can be for children considered at risk of removal from the home (Activities for Children at Risk of Foster Care (admin) – Activity Code 420), for children considered not at risk (Not at Risk of Foster Care – Activity Code 421), services for children in the home to preserve the family’s stability (Direct Provision of Treatment/Counseling – Activity Code 415), and activities regarding various levels of child abuse and neglect (CPS Assessments – Activity Code 424 or CPS Investigations – Activity Code 425).
- 800 Non-Client Specific: This program code should be selected when choosing General Administration/Staff Development – Activity Code 900; Lunch, Breaks, Personal Business – Activity Code 950; Employee on Leave – Activity Code 995; Employee Not Scheduled to Work – Activity Code 998; or Position Vacant/Invalid Response – Activity Code 999.

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Activity Codes (Circle Only One)

Once the Program has been selected, review the activities under the Program and select the activity being performed by circling the number of the one (1) activity that best describes what is being done at the moment specified on the RMS Observation Form. If you need help in determining which activity to check, please refer to the following descriptions. If you are not working on a specific case, select Activity Code 900 – Non-Client Specific Administration/Staff Development.

400 **Intake/Eligibility Determination/Redetermination:** This activity code is used whenever the worker is performing any activity that contributes to making the determination of client eligibility. Following are some examples of activities related to **Intake/Eligibility Determination/Redetermination:**

- Providing applicant with information/documents and orienting applicant to the process;
- Collecting and verifying information from applicant or others which is used in the determination (i.e. social security number, birth certificates, resources, income, etc.);
- Completing and processing associated eligibility forms;
- Preparation of notice of decision;
- Reviewing and updating file each time the client's circumstances change;
- Redetermining eligibility; or
- All planning, assessments and paperwork which contributes to the above activities.

FOR ALL WORKERS: This includes all efforts and research related to determining the amount of assistance for which the client is eligible.

FOR FOSTER CARE WORKERS: In addition, this includes verifying that the foster home placement is approved/licensed and that the placement is an IV-E reimbursable placement.

FOR ELIGIBILITY WORKERS: This includes maintaining records of actions taken with respect to the applicant's/recipient's application and making the determination of continuing eligibility.

401 **Benefits Issuance:** This activity code includes client service and support tasks, data entry, data processing, and other activities related to the readiness, preparation, printing, issuance/reissuance, replacement, distribution/redistribution, delivery, recovery or recoupment other than fraud related, validation/voiding, accounting and reconciliation, reporting, storage, control/auditing and payment of benefit checks or coupons or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) transactions.

403 **Fraud Investigation/Prevention:** This activity code includes all activities directly related to the investigation of a fraud case. This activity includes "up front" activities to prevent fraud. This activity also includes the recovery or recoupment of payments resulting from fraud investigation.

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404 Develop, Review and Revise the Case Plan: This administrative activity code should be used when a worker spends time assessing the placement needs of a client, obtaining diagnostic information, when appropriate, and developing and revising the case plan as required by departmental regulations. Following are some examples of activities related to the **Develop, Review and Revise the Case Plan:**

- Home visits with the client and the client's family to discuss and explore their needs, strengths, resources and existing support systems;
- Contact with mental health, education or other professionals involved with the client/client's family to obtain information related to the psychological, developmental, behavioral and educational needs and goals;
- Compiling case assessment reports that might consider information regarding psychological, developmental, behavioral and educational factors;
- Time spent analyzing specialized assessments (psychiatric evaluations, medical or educational evaluations) to inform the case plan;
- Coding/Reviewing client specific provider invoices; or
- Travel allowable to the program on behalf of the client (not transportation of the client).

405 Casework/Case Management/Supervision: This administrative activity code should be used when a worker spends time arranging for the services and monitoring the implementation of case plans assuring services are provided as required by the plans, scheduling and conducting reviews of children in placement and revising case plans as required by reviews.

Arranging for services and assuring services are provided excludes participating in service delivery/provision or providing a service directly to the client. Following are some examples of activities related to **Case Management/Supervision:**

- Routine contacts, home visits, monitoring and/or communicating with others in relation to the status of the client, the case plan, goals for the client and family;
- Development of goals, case plans, written service agreements and routine supervisory activities;
- Updating case file to document client's progress with meeting goals of the case plan;
- Preparing for and attending case conferences and consultation meetings (including administrative panel reviews) where client progress is discussed with involved service providers and/or other agency staff;
- Supervisory Case Conferences;
- Arranging for and monitoring the provision of services identified in case plans;
- Arranging for any counseling necessary to prepare the client and family for placement;
- Arranging for the provision of pre and post adoption services:
- Arranging for pre-placement visits;
- Arranging for permanency planning and pre-placement activities; or
- Travel allowable to the program on behalf of the client (not transportation of the client).

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406 **Placement of Client:** This administrative activity code should be used when a worker spends time identifying appropriate placement resources, providing information to the placement resource and arranging for the placement of the client. Following are some examples of activities related to the **Placement of Client:**

- Working with foster parents to prepare them to receive a child;
- Contacts with placement providers on any issues related to the care of a specific child;
- Child specific recruitment;
- Selection of an approved adoptive family appropriate for the needs of the child;
- Adoptive home studies for a specific child; or
- Transporting client for pre-placement visits and for client placement.

For activities relating to Interstate Compact on Placement of Children activity related to a specific child select Activity Code 451 State-to-State home Studies.

407 **Prepare/Participate in Court Proceedings:** This administrative activity code should be used when the worker is spending time preparing or reviewing reports to the court/fair hearing panel, appearing at hearings and providing testimony. Following are some examples of **Prepare/Participate in Court Proceedings:**

- Participation in all fair hearings and appeals stemming from eligibility determinations;
- Participation in all fair hearings and appeals on closed or denied service cases;
- Participation in any court appearance where the local agency is seeking custody of a child;
- Participation in any court activity necessary for the adoptive placement of a child, other than independent adoptions;
- Participation in any court appearance related to obtaining child support for a child in placement or under the supervision of county agency; or
- Preparation of reports to the court/fair hearings panel for any of the judicial proceeding, subsequent follow up with court and all travel to and from.

409 **Uniform Assessment Instrument:** This code includes activities for completing the Uniform Assessment Instrument (UAI), writing the assessment and coordinating collateral contacts for nursing home, community-based care, home-based care waiver, home-based care pre-admission screening and Assisted Living Facility (ALF) services.

412 **Referral to Services:** This administrative activity code should be used when the worker is providing information about needed or requested services. Following are some examples of **Referral to Services:**

- Referrals to community resources for additional supports such as referral to food banks, counseling and support groups;
- Referrals to services intended to enhance the possibility of a child's return to his/her home;
- Referrals to needed medical, behavioral health or health services;

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- Referrals to family planning services; or
- Referrals to parenting classes.

413 Time-Limited Family Reunification (Admin only): This activity code should be used when the worker is performing an allowable administrative activity for a child in foster care who has been in care 15 months or less and has the goal of reunification. Following are some examples of **Time-Limited Family Reunification administrative activities**:

- Develop, review, or revise the case plan
- Home visits with the child and the child's family to discuss and explore their needs, strengths, resources and existing support systems;
- Contact with mental health, education or other professionals involved with the child/child's family to obtain information related to the child's psychological, developmental, behavioral and educational needs and goals;
- Routine contacts, monitoring and/or communicating with others in relation to the status of the client, the case plan, goals for the client and family;
- Updating case file to document client's progress with meeting goals of the case plan;
- Participation in any court appearance related to the status of a child who is in placement;
- Referrals to services intended to enhance the possibility of a child's return to his/her home;
- Referrals to needed medical, behavioral health or health services;
- Travel allowable to the program on behalf of the client (not transportation of the client).

414 Time-Limited Family Reunification Services: This activity code should be used when the worker is providing a direct service for a child in foster care who has been in care 15 (fifteen) months or less and has the goal of reunification. Following are some examples of **Time-Limited Family Reunification Services**:

- Individual, group and family counseling;
- Inpatient, residential or outpatient substance abuse treatment services;
- Assistance to address domestic violence;
- Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families,
- Services to ameliorate or remedy personal problems, behaviors or home conditions; or
- Transportation of child and or family to or from a reunification service

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415 Direct Provision of Treatment/Counseling: This activity code should be used when the worker is providing direct services such as treatment and counseling to a child, the child's family, or the child's substitute care provider to ameliorate or remedy personal problems, behaviors or home conditions. Following are some examples of **Direct Provision of Treatment/Counseling**:

- Individual, group and family counseling;
- Inpatient, residential or outpatient substance abuse treatment services;
- Assistance to address domestic violence;
- Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families,
- Services to ameliorate or remedy personal problems, behaviors or home conditions;
- Writing educational or psychiatric evaluation reports;
- Services designed to improve parenting skills;
- Mentoring services; or
- Parent support groups designed to improve parenting skills, family budgeting, coping with stress, health, and nutrition.

Select this activity code for transportation to or from any of the services and activities described above. ***This activity does not include casework, case management or monitoring the case plan. If client is at risk of foster care select Activity Code 420 (Activities for Children at Risk of Foster Care); otherwise if client is not at risk of foster care select Activity Code 421 (Activities for Children Not at Risk of Foster Care (Admin)); if client is already in foster care or has been adopted see Activity Code 405 Casework/Case Management/Supervision.***

418 Preparation for Independent Living (14 to 18 year olds): This administrative activity code is used when working with a child up to the age of 18 (or up to age 19 if likely to complete high school or equivalent) that participates in the Independent Living program or lives independently upon leaving foster care, including enabling participant to seek a high school diploma or equivalent or to take part in vocational training, providing training in daily living skills, budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, and career planning, coordinating individual and group counseling; integrating and coordinating services otherwise unavailable to participants; and writing independent living plans. ***If services are rendered on behalf of this client, use Activity Code 419.***

419 Preparation for Independent Living (Young Adults): This activity code is to be used to help young adults between the ages of 18 to 21 participate in the Independent Living program or to otherwise live independently upon leaving foster care, including enabling participant to seek a high school diploma or equivalent or to take part in appropriate vocational training, providing training in daily living skills, budgeting, locating and maintaining housing, and career planning, coordinating individual and group counseling; integrating and coordinating services otherwise unavailable to participants; and writing transitional independent living plans. This activity code should also be used for all independent living services such as mentoring, substance abuse services, teen pregnancy prevention and financial management services.

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420 Activities for Children at Risk of Foster Care (Admin Only): This activity code is used when the worker is working with a child that resides in his or her home and the child's case plan or the family service plan documents the child is a candidate for foster care. This should be selected when performing activities for a child that is at serious risk of removal from the home, only if documentation to support candidacy is in effect at the moment-in-time the staff person is being sampled. This documentation of a determination (or redetermination) as to whether the child remains at serious risk of removal from the home must be updated every six months, at a minimum.

NOTE FOR CPS WORKERS: This program also includes CPS efforts (after completing the assessment or investigation) for children who are considered foster care candidates for removal from the home, in accordance with the above guidelines.

In addition the associated case plan must:

- be a written document that is a discrete part of the case record;
- be developed jointly with the parent(s) or guardian of the child; and
- include a description of the services offered and provided to prevent removal of the child from the home

The following are some examples of administrative activities which are considered allowable:

- Referral to Services
- Preparation for/Participation in Judicial Determinations
- Placement of the Child
- Review and Revision of the Existing Case
- Case Management/Supervision

When reviewing, revising and updating a Family Service Plan and more than one child is considered a candidate as evident by documentation above, select the child that most closely relates to the activity you are engaged in at the time of the moment.

Documentation sources dated more than six months prior to or dated after the sample moment, do not support a documentation of candidacy. All activities for non-candidates should be categorized as Activities for Children Not at Risk of Foster Care (Activity Code 421).

421 Activities for Children Not at Risk of Foster Care (Admin): This activity code is to be used when the worker is working with a child that still resides in his or her home and the child's case plan or the family service plan does not document the child is a candidate for foster care. Following are some examples of **Activities for Children Not at Risk of Foster Care (Admin)**:

- Completing a court ordered home study for non-foster or non-agency adoption cases (custody case, pending divorce, etc.); or
- Casework/case management where the child is not at serious risk of foster care placement.

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- 424 CPS Family Assessments: This activity code should be selected for the formal information gathering process utilized by the local department in determining for child protective services (CPS) whether or not services are needed to ensure child safety and/or to prevent recurrence of child abuse or neglect. ***It does not include case management and other ongoing activities related to the client that occur after the Assessment process, if client is at risk of foster care select Activity Code 420 (Activities for Children at Risk of Foster Care (Admin Only)); otherwise if client is not at risk of foster care select Activity Code 421 (Activities for Children Not at Risk of Foster Care (Admin)).***
- 425 Investigations/Specialized Investigative Training(CPS/APS Only): This activity code is selected for CPS and APS Investigation, which includes the formal information gathering process utilized by the local department in determining: for child protective services (CPS) whether or not abuse or neglect has occurred; for adult protective services (APS) also whether or not the adult needs protective services. ***It does not include case management and other ongoing activities related to the client that occur after the investigation process, if client is at risk of foster care select Activity Code 420 (Activities for Children at Risk of Foster Care (Admin Only)); otherwise if client is not at risk of foster care select Activity Code 421 (Activities for Children Not at Risk of Foster Care (Admin)).***
- This activity code also includes training relating to specialized skills such as conducting child abuse and neglect investigations or how to address or treat child or family problems or behaviors. Use this code when training supports the delivery of social services rather than the administration of the title IV-E state plan.***
- 426 Intake: This activity code should be selected when the intake worker is gathering information, evaluating and requesting additional information regarding the specifics of the complaint/concern. This activity begins with the referral for services and ends with the decision that the request will be assigned to a worker for assessment or other actions or that no action will be taken. This activity includes screening and prioritizing valid complaints.
- 450 Independent Adoptive Home Studies: This activity code includes home studies when the birth parents and the adoptive parents make an agreement that the adoption should go forward and no Department of Social Services is involved. This is a non-allowable IV-E activity. ***This activity does not include state-to-state home studies (see activity code 451), or when the child is known to LDSS select 406 Placement of the Client or select activity 455 Parent Recruitment/Assessment for home studies where the child has not been identified and matched with foster/adoptive parents.***
- 451 State-to-State Home Studies: This activity code should be selected when the child welfare worker is compiling an out-of-state home study that has been requested by another state. ***When the child is known to LDSS select 406 Placement of the Client or select activity 455 Parent Recruitment/Assessment for home studies where the child has not been identified and matched with foster/adoptive parents.***

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452 Training-Program Related: This activity code should be selected when the worker is preparing for, attending and/or delivering training directly related to the worker's job function. Travel related to this training activity should be coded here as well. Following are some examples of activities related to **Training-Program Related:**

- Social work practice, such as family centered practice and social work methods including interviewing and assessment;
- Training on referrals to services;
- TANF New Worker Training Phase I;
- Medicaid Aged, Blind and Disabled New Worker Training Phase II;
- Casework Process and Case Planning in Child Welfare;
- In-service training;
- Activities designed to preserve, strengthen, and reunify the family, if the training is not related to providing treatment or services; or
- Contract negotiation, monitoring or voucher processing training.

Any training that is not directly related to the workers job function such as Motivational Training, CPR Training and Time Management should be captured under Program Code 800 Non-Client Specific with an Activity Code of 900 General Admin/Staff Development.

453 Training-Program Related; Non Investigations: This activity code should be selected when the child welfare worker is attending and/or delivering training an any topic areas that are necessary for the proper and efficient administration of our title IV-E state plan. Following are some examples of allowable training:

- Social work practice, such as family centered practice and social work methods including interviewing and assessment;
- Child abuse and neglect issues, such as the impact of child abuse and neglect on a child, and general overviews of the issues involved in child abuse and neglect investigations, as long as the training is not related to how to conduct an investigation of child abuse and neglect;
- Cultural competency related to children and families;
- Communication skills required to work with children and families; or
- General substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues related to children and families in the child welfare system as long as training is not related to providing treatment or services.

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- 455 Parent Recruitment/Assessment: This activity code should be selected when speaking to prospective foster and adoptive home applicants; participating in local forums or public service programs to inform the public of need and assessing the potential foster or adoptive parent through a home study. Following are some examples of allowable activities:
- Promotion of the program;
 - Composing and distributing promotional brochures or flyers;
 - Criminal background checks for prospective foster parents/kinship foster homes;
 - General recruitment of potential adoptive and/or foster parents (notifying by websites, newspapers, flyers, etc.); or
 - Home studies, preparation for site visits, travel to and from home, preparing written reports for prospective resource (foster and/or adoptive) parents *when foster/adoptive child has not been identified*.
- 503 Quality Initiatives: This activity code includes improving the quality or availability of child care services, consumer education, and parental choice. This includes improving the monitoring of compliance with, and enforcement of applicable State and Local requirements.
- 600 Other Employment-Related Activities: This activity code includes evaluation of a client's job skills, education level, occupational ability, interests, supportive service needs and to develop a plan that outlines a strategy to help an individual achieve his/her education, training and employment goals. This activity may include educational activities of basic and remedial education, high school or alternative designed to prepare an individual for a high school degree or equivalent GED (General Education Development) and education in English as a second language, job skills training, job readiness, work supplementation, on-the-job (OJT) training, work experience and other activities designed to improve the employability of a client. *This activity code also includes transportation services to enable participants to travel to and from authorized program activities or employment. The need for transportation must be linked to needs identified on the participant's case plan.*

NOTE: Activity code 900 should be use only when another activity code cannot be selected.

- 900 General Administration/Staff Development: This activity code is selected when the worker is engaged in an activity directed at advancing the local agency program goals. Following are some examples of **General Administration/Staff Development**:
- Conduct/Participate in non-client related staff meetings;
 - Travel (job-related, but not client specific);
 - Public information activities and outreach;
 - Reviewing agency office procedures;
 - First aid, CPR, or facility security training;
 - General administrative training (such as copier, computers and stress management);
 - Reviewing employee grievance procedures;
 - Reviewing payroll and leave activity;
 - Organizing work area;
 - Emergency preparedness; or

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- Any training that is not directly related to the workers job function (such as Motivational Training and Time Management Training).

- 950 Employee on Lunch/Breaks/Personal Business: This activity code includes lunch time, scheduled break time and time spent on activities of a personal nature.
- 995 Employee on Leave: This activity code is used for all scheduled and unscheduled leave including vacation, sick and other such as military, maternity and jury duty leave.
- 998 Employee Not Scheduled to Work (including Flextime): This activity code is used when a worker is not scheduled for the RMS observation time designated for sampling because he or she is working part-time or working a flex-time schedule. The RMS observation hours are 9:00 a.m. until noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- 999 Position Vacant/Invalid Response: This activity code is used when a position has become vacant during the quarter - unless the position is filled by another employee. Incumbent employee should complete the RMS Observation Form if he/she fills the vacant position. Also use this category for identifying inaccurate information on the RMS Observation Form.

Worker Signature: After completing the RMS Observation Form, the worker should sign to confirm the observation, date and designate the time of completion on the RMS Certification Page. If the worker is not available to sign the RMS Certification Page and the Observer knows the correct entries to be made on the RMS Observation Form, the form should be completed by the Observer.

In all instances, the RMS Observation Form should be completed at the time closest to the observation moment it can be to reasonably assure the entries on the RMS Certification Page will accurately describe worker activity.

Observer Signature: The RMS Observer must sign on the bottom line of the RMS Certification Page, record the time of completion of the form and then submit the RMS Observation Form promptly for data entry.

Retention of Forms and Filing:

Retain all RMS Observation Forms for three years or until any audit issue is resolved, whichever is later.

Completed RMS Observation Forms should be filed by applicable quarter then by Control Number order.

All questions with regard to the appropriate use of the Random Moment Sampling system should be directed to the VDSS Division of Finance at (804) 726-7209.

BROADCAST 4699

DATE: Jan. 4, 2008

TO: All State and Local Agency Staff

FROM: Erik Beecroft, Office of Research

TIME: 11:35 a.m.

SUBJECT: Publication of the 2008 Annual Statistical Report

CONTACT: Molly Sheahan at (804) 726-7614 or molly.sheahan@dss.virginia.gov

The 2008 Annual Statistical Report is now available on the VDSS public web site, on the “Reports” page. The direct link is:

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/agency_wide/annual_statistical.cgi.

For most programs, the report shows statewide caseload and expenditures data for the past 11 state fiscal years, from 1997 through 2007. The report is organized by major program areas, including benefit programs, family services, child care, licensing, community and volunteer services, and child support enforcement.

We hope the report is useful to you.

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Social Services
Office of the Commissioner
7 N. 8th St.
Richmond, VA 23219

Commissioner's Memo No. 008

DATE: February 22, 2008
TO: Directors of Local Departments of Social Services
FROM: Anthony Conyers Jr.

Directors,

Following are the topics contained in this Memorandum:

- [Medicaid Funding Pre-Admission Screenings](#)
- [Improvement of OASIS data](#)

Medicaid Funded Pre-Admission Screenings

An issue has developed involving pre-admission screening payments for nursing facility and community-based care.

During their review of the Virginia Department of Social Services' (VDSS) public assistance cost allocation plan (PACAP) rewrite, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) questioned the payments made to local departments of social services (LDSS) by the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) for pre-admission screenings. CMS believed we were double charging Medicaid for these screenings – once through direct payment to LDSS by DMAS and a second time via our Random Moment Sampling (RMS) process. VDSS agreed to look into the situation and take necessary and appropriate actions.

Our review revealed that CMS is right in most instances. Medicaid is being directly charged for pre-admission screenings, with DMAS making payments to LDSS. VDSS samples for these screenings using RMS and charges the related costs to Medicaid. This may result in a duplicate charge to and reimbursement by DMAS, depending on how LDSS account for the direct payments. With your assistance, we found direct reimbursements to LDSS were being handled in a number of ways. In some cases, LDSS were depositing these funds into special welfare accounts; others were depositing them into local "general" funds; some were crediting them back to VDSS through the monthly LASER process as they were originally intended to be. We found few instances of the last category.

For the past several months VDSS has worked on this issue with the Virginia League of Social Service Executives (League) Administrative and Adult Services Committees, and with DMAS. Collectively, we have determined that the most appropriate action for VDSS is to ask DMAS to stop direct reimbursements to LDSS effective March 31, 2008. This eliminates the potential double charging of pre-admission screenings and eliminates a number of accounting transactions that result in a net financial gain of **zero** when the payments are credited back through the monthly LASER process as they were intended to be. DMAS will be paying for Medicaid activities – including pre-admission screenings – through the RMS process.

During fiscal year 2007, DMAS made direct payments to LDSS totaling \$112K for pre-admission screenings charged to Medicaid. Payments to date for fiscal year 2008 are consistent with last year, averaging about \$9K per month. The fiscal impact of eliminating these direct payments will be less since some LDSS are correctly crediting the payments back to VDSS each month. Operationally, the change will eliminate a number of needless accounting transactions that yield no financial gain.

The pre-admission screening process is a vital component of the long-term care system in Virginia. VDSS has assured DMAS that LDSS will continue to perform the pre-admission screenings in the community in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). Payments to VDH for its participation in these pre-admission screenings are not impacted by this change, because VDH uses a different approach to account for its costs.

This new process will not impact payments to LDSS related to screenings for Assisted Living Facilities. Those payments are made with state general funds and are not of immediate concern. The change allows us to continue on an important path: ensuring we claim every dime of federal reimbursement to which we are entitled, and none to which we are not.

Please contact J.R. Simpson at j.r.simpson@dss.virginia.gov or (804)-726-7204 if additional information is required or desired.

Improvement of OASIS data

The Division of Family Services (DFS) is currently leading a statewide effort to improve the quality of Online Automated Services Information System (OASIS) data as a part of the agency wide Data Integrity Project. DFS will continue providing informational broadcasts as a part of this effort. Upcoming broadcasts will provide detailed instructions to LDSS on how to make corrections to data inaccuracies related

to the Title IV-E penetration rate, reunification numbers, legal basis information, and a clean up of data errors discovered during the recent Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) submission process.

DFS will provide technical assistance to LDSS in making corrections to open cases, and continue the partnership with the OASIS unit in cleaning up closed case records. Please make sure that appropriate staff members are monitoring broadcasts on SPARK for these updates, and that they are communicating the recommended procedures with OASIS users. For additional information about this process please contact Matt Wade at matthew.wade@dss.virginia.gov or (804)-726-7941.

Thank you for your attention.

AC/VDSS