**All VR Call**

**3 – 4 p.m. EDT**

***The OSM provides transcripts in a rough draft format created via Live Captioning which was performed to facilitate Communication Accessibility. These transcripts are not verbatim records of training sessions, webinars or conference calls.***

Operator: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, this is your operator. Today's conference is scheduled to begin momentarily. Until that time your lines will again be placed on hold. Thank you for your patience.

Regina Bowden: Good afternoon, everyone, thank you for joining us for the monthly VR call. We have a short agenda today so that will be a good thing because that means we'll have more time to take questions and answers from everyone. So we will go ahead and jump into the call and first on the agenda is a cost reimbursement update and Danielle Armstrong is here to -- I'm sorry, Raquel will give you that update. Raquel is the person who, you may recognize her voice, she mans our help desk.

Raquel Donaldson: Good afternoon everyone, this is Raquel. I know that it's not the time for anyone to submit it since you have to wait for the RSA information the end of this month, but please I do encourage you to go ahead and continue to send in any claims with a VR closure date of October or later. That's important because we have to stamp it the day it's received and we need to use that information, we don't want you to hold on to it and end up with an untimely filing. So if anyone had any questions about that or still have questions, you know how to reach me at the help desk or give me a call. That's all I have today. Everyone, if I don't speak to you, have a great holiday.

Regina Bowden: Thanks Raquel, Michelle are you on the line?

Michelle Laisure: For the holiday schedule here at the ticket management office we will be closed for Friday, December the 25th and we will be closed on Friday, January 1st, 2016. If you go to our web site on either one of those two days you will get a message that the office here is closed.

We don't foresee any major snowstorms on the horizon. However, please check the office of personnel management, OPM’s, schedule which has basically they have a color code which is red, yellow and green. Red indicates that all federal offices in the greater Washington, DC, area are closed and the McLean office here in Virginia follows that schedule. Baltimore is in a different geographical area and they follow a different snowstorm alert. So, again, if between now and the first of January we have a snowstorm or inclement weather, please check office of personnel management, their web site, and then also the ticket web site will be updated as well if we are closed due to weather.

The next call after today's call follows the same schedule, second Tuesday of the month, and that will be on Tuesday, January the 12th. We are really pleased and excited to have Amy porter, commissioner of the Connecticut department of rehabilitation services, present on that call. That call has been, is a combination of several organizations working with the Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services around providing work incentive counseling services and we are very fortunate to be able to have the lead participants of this study that has been published nationally to share their outcomes with us on the call in January. So please mark your calendar, have your staff tune in to hear that call because it's more than just about -- it's more about how we can work the work incentive counseling component into our services for individuals on the ticket to work program.

And that concludes my announcements, turning it back to you.

Regina Bowden: Thanks very much. I'm going to put Danielle Armstrong back on the phone with you. She wants to talk to you about some recent visitors we had here at our VR office.

Danielle Armstrong: We have two-day training for you or your staff. Over the course of two days we go over everything you need to know about the payment process, the EN payment process, the VR payment process and pretty much everything in between, the information you need for the payments, suitability, portal, it's kind of a two-day everything you need to know, new staff, refresher training. We just recently had staff from the New Jersey and Colorado VRs. If that is something that you need or you are interested in, contact the help desk or you can contact Linda Custis directly, she has spoken with several of you about setting up this training and we do it based on your need and availability.

Regina Bowden: Thanks Danielle, and next we have Katie and she will give you an update on the Ticket Portal.

Katie Streibinger: I want to start off with a reminder of one of the fields in the Ticket Portal, one of the main screens we all use is check ticket assignability to check the status of a ticket. The in use field on that screen, when it says whether a ticket is in use or not, that in use field refers to CDR protection. If that says in use is yes, then the beneficiary does have CDR protection. If it says no the beneficiary does not have CDR protection and has most likely, if the ticket is not assigned, failed TPR the in-use field has nothing to do with whether the ticket is currently assigned. That information can be seen in a box in the middle of the field. If you have any questions please send it to the VR help desk if something does not check. You can also see, if you see an in use status of no, if you see the last TPR status you will see they failed and that is what that field is showing you.

I want to go over some information about the new release on Saturday, December 19th. The Portal is going to be unavailable for about half the day while we make sure everything is correctly working. You will see a notification from us about that, it's two Saturdays from now on the 19th, enhancement to the check ticket assignability screen. From that screen, the key thing about that screen is you can type in an SSN and it immediately brings you to an a beneficiary, whereas going to the tickets assigned to me or not assigned to me, it brings you to an SSN and i know it's been difficult for you to get to a beneficiary. You will have the option to unassign a ticket, convert the case from VR to a ticket if the 90 days have not passed. If that is an option you will see the button appear. You will not see buttons for something you cannot do on the ticket. You can also take a ticket and convert it to VR and also the action menu that you are navigating to from the current beneficiary list, you will see an option to click to the options list from that screen. We are making it a much better resource for you if you have a beneficiary and you know the SSN, we can take you to the actions you want to take a lot faster than before.

Another field on the spreadsheets, as you may know when you go to the list of current beneficiaries in the portal you can have the option to download the entire list to excel. When you download that list to the excel spreadsheet you have the SSN provided to you there. We are adding another field to the file and that is the resident state of the beneficiary. So those are the major changes of the December 19th release. If anyone encounters any problems please let us know at the VR help desk after the release and if there are any problems you will get an email from us or it will be communicated using the announcement screen. Hopefully we will have no problems but just to let you know that is in our future.

Regina Bowden: Thanks Katie. Michelle, we are going to turn it back over to you in case there are any questions about the portal or just questions about VR in general.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Regina. Operator, we will open our line for questions from our participants. I do not see any questions on our chat line, it's kind of quiet today. Thank you, everyone, for those updates. Operator, do we have any questions?

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, if you would like to register a question, please press star followed by the 1 on your telephone key pad. If your question has been answered and you would like to withdraw your registration, please press the pound key. One moment for our first question, which comes from the line of Tom Shirak.

Eric: It's actually Eric, I'm here with Tom. Just a couple real quick questions. One, I was just wondering what's the most recent or current month or quarter of wages that you guys are working from for cost reimbursement claims right now?

Katie Striebinger: September 2015.

Eric: Then the other question I had was with regard to submitting of the batch files on the portal. I just had a question about we keep getting stuck up on cases with leading zeros and the format that we should be submitting those in, leading zeros don't really work very well with csv files so I keep have to go try to convert those to dashes or not to dashes or to have the leading zeros or not have the leading zeros. What's the best format for those specific cases?

Katie Streibinger: Okay, so how are you creating the files?

Eric: Right now the problem is it's, we're using an excel spreadsheet, excel sheet that we had our (inaudible) system bring out for us. Whenever I submit a batch file, it doesn’t have any cases without leading zeros work fine. But if it has leading zeros usually it bounces back and it will say there's an error on line 1 incorrect character. It seems only to happen with leading zero example. So I try to do them without zeros but that doesn't seem to work either. Usually I end up having to do them with dashes and the leading zeros and that doesn't seem to work very well with excel csv errors and gives me a lot of errors. Just trying to figure out what format you would recommend to submit those cases that have zeros at the beginning of the SSN

Katie Streibinger: There is a problem with excel, excel does drop leading zeros. We do not use excel here to open CSV files. The best thing is word pad or notepad. My guess is if you were to take your CSV file that you were getting that line error, if you were to open that in notepad or word pad, you would probably see there's some special character at the beginning of your file that is being put in there.

Eric: Compatibility for excel, okay, I can try to do it from word pad or notepad.

Katie Streibinger: If it isn't a huge inconvenience, that's usually how I inspect a file is by opening it in something like that because that will retain the leading zeros while excel just drops them. There's something about excel that it's just not friendly in that way and there's really nothing we can do about excel.

If you continue to have problems send something to the VR help desk and we'll take a look at it, try to find a better way to help you. So the file is coming out of aware and then you --.

Eric: I'm converting it, I think, I don't recall but I'm getting it as a text file from our information system that work through aware. I'm getting it as a text file but in order to bring it in to upload it I need to convert it to csv and that's just a convert on my computer. But I've been taking those that have leading zeros and trying to convert it a better way, but notepad may be a better option.

Katie Streibinger: Is the format you previously use d to submit files as txt files in aware, not even open the files just rename the file so the name is dot csv and not dot txt as a csv it's doing something fun key to it?

Eric: The first time I did it, I did the rename it then it came to the message about are you sure you want to save it -- all right, I'll give that a try next time.

Katie Streibinger: Yeah, try not opening it. I'll bet it's excel just screwing it up.

Tom: This is a twofer, this is Tom and I have a question that goes back to cost formulas. Out of the WEONA, we understand that RSA is making a change so that we, VR agencies are no longer going to be submitting the RSA-113 which is used in the cost formula, but as of the fourth quarter 2016 will be relying on substituting the 911 report for, in place of the 113. So my question is, is social security and RSA talking about this issue in relation to how it will impact the calculation of cost formulas?

Raquel Donaldson: Hi, Tom, this is Raquel. Actually Nate Arnold and I have already had one conference call with RSA and I'm sure it's going to continue. We just need to follow-up at some point last year. So to answer your question, yes, we have been in communication with regard to that.

Tom: You've made me very happy, thank you. I'm very, very glad to hear that. Okay, thank you.

Raquel Donaldson: You're welcome.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, as a reminder, for an audio question, simply question star to the key pad. That is star 1. There are no further questions at this time.

Michelle Laisure: Very good. We have completed our announcements. Again, we really would like to encourage everyone to include your staff on the call next month to hear Amy Porter, commissioner from the Connecticut department of rehabilitation services, and all of us hear from TPM wish all of you out there a very happy and merry holiday. From SSA, any closing remarks?

Regina Bowden: No, same here, we wish everyone happy holidays and we'll talk to you on the 12th. Thank you.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you. Operator, this concludes our call.

Operator: Thank you, you may now disconnect. Presenters, please hold your line.

[END OF CALL]