**All State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Call**

**3 – 4:00 p.m. EST**

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Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. Welcome to the national all VR conference call. During the presentation, all participants will be in listen only mode. Afterwards we will conduct a question and answer session. If you have a question, please press star followed by the number 1 on your telephone. If you should need assistance to reach an operator at any time. press zero. As a reminder this call is being recorded on Tuesday, February 9, 2016.
I will now introduce Michelle Laisure, Ticket Development Manager.

Michelle Laisure: We are happy to have you all here today and happy Valentine’s.
We will start off with opening comments from rob, moving into our general announcements, an update on our ticket portal from Katie Striebinger. Rob, I would like to turn it over to you at this time.

Rob Pfaff: Thanks, Michelle, and good afternoon, everyone. We are glad you could join us for our February all VR call. I don't have a lot to say in introduction, other than welcome. We will walk through the agenda with you and at the end of the call we will have an opportunity for some questions and answers. Without further ado I will turn it over to Desiree Fitzgerald who will talk about some changes to our call format.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Hello, everyone, I just wanted to make a couple of brief announcements.
We want to be sure we continue to be responsive to your needs and that the call is best serving you. One of the things we want to do is to make sure we are giving you the opportunity to provide input and I know we have done that and you've been giving us feedback through Michelle in the past, but in the future you are going to be getting information, actually it's going to be a monthly outreach to you all for conference topics, so we'll be canvasing you for call topics and also for questions for these calls.
Also I just wanted to say remember that case-specific questions can come to the help desk throughout the month and you don't have to hold those type of pressing case-specific questions for these calls.
The other thing that I wanted to mention is that we will begin using these calls in part to inform you of progress on the VR payment automation. We haven't been talking much about it, you knew we were hard at work on it, so we're going to start giving you some updates and we'll give you some information in just a minute.
In addition we are going to probably be using these calls and additional calls in the not distant future to begin training on the VR payments through the portal. So without further ado I guess U will send it to Michelle, she has an announcement as well.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Desiree, I'm sure the VR agencies are looking forward to hearing how that electronic payment system is going to move forward. Attendance for the last couple calls has been outstanding and I imagine it will just continue to have good attendance in the future with those type of agenda topics.
This afternoon we are pleased and excited to share with you that the social security ticket program will be hosting a second virtual jobs fair on march the 16th and we know that many of the VR agencies were definitely in attendance and encouraged beneficiaries to register for the job fair.
This job fair is a little different from the one we had earlier. The first one was a national event but this one will be a regional job fair. We will be targeting the District of Columbia, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Puerto Rico. Again, those areas that we will be targeting for the regional job fair which will take place on march the 16th is the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Virginia, west Virginia and Puerto Rico. Many of you out there the ticket coordinators have received an invitation to join us for that upcoming event.
As you know, similar to the last virtual jobs fair, our purpose is to connect ticket participants with federal contractors who are looking to hire in these locations. So, as always, we are focusing on qualified and job-ready beneficiaries from the areas that we are targeting this year -- i mean this regional call. The ticket program manager is currently recruiting employers to participate in this virtual job fair.
So how can you help, ticket coordinators? As last time, select and prepare beneficiaries in advance of the job fair. This includes updating and having a well-prepared resume', assisting them with registering for the event and having them sign a consent to release of information which is required by social security. The ticket program manager team will be providing training on how to prepare your beneficiaries to participate in the job fair.
Also giving you instructions on how to have the beneficiaries register and navigate on the job fair platform. We want our beneficiaries to get the most out of this opportunity. It is very worthwhile to experience a virtual job fair. So we're looking for you to spread the word and get beneficiaries to register once that information becomes available.
Again, please note on your calendar march the 16th from 1:00 to 5:00 pm stay tuned for additional information, especially on the training that we will provide you so that your beneficiaries are ready to participate in the virtual job fair.
Also, for those of you that received the email from the ticket management program today, please respond and let us know that you are interested in participating and that concludes my announcement on that and I will move on to the next agenda topic, which is the ticket portal. Katie?

Katie Striebinger: Hi, good afternoon, everyone. I just wanted to give you a brief update on where we are with the Ticket Portal and the enhancements that are coming our way. We had a demo today which was rather exciting looking at the cost reimbursement process in the portal and now I am asking for some volunteers to join us for a meeting we're going to have next week to discuss the feature we're adding to the portal that will allow you to submit cost reimbursement claims electronically by uploading an exit file. This will be a technical call to go over a lot of the details, a lot of the structures are already set up. This is a chance to give your input and discuss how it's going to work. We will giving more materials once everything is done, we will be giving training and guidance, this is not the only time you are going to hear about how it will work, but we wanted to give those of you who have programs that will need to download these files from your system to an xml file that you want to upload into the file, wanted to give you a chance to get on a call with our programmers to participate in it. In order to get into the call, please email the help desk, put in the subject line we'll call it portal, something about the portal electronic file and put your email address and anybody else that you would want to be invited from your VR and we will send you an update for the meeting. If you can't make it or the time doesn't work, we will be sure we are in touch with you or anyone on your staff. This is really exciting and we look forward to your participation and your partnership. Once again, just email the VR help desk and put something in the subject line about the VR electronic file, if you need to give it to Katie that's fine and let me know who needs to be invited to the meeting and we will go from there and I'm going to hand it over to Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Katie, we just have another question for you. We don't have the date yet for your meeting, correct?

Katie Striebinger: Correct. I expect to have a date when I send the invite.

Michelle Laisure: Okay, sounds good.

Katie Striebinger: I just need everybody to respond by COB on Friday this week.

Michelle Laisure: And you will respond back out by Tuesday of next week or actually on Monday.

Katie Striebinger: That's right, I almost forgot.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you. Cost reimbursement. Danielle

Danielle Armstrong: Hello, everyone. We also have with you today your help desk analysts just to remind you, and Desiree said you can always send in any of your questions and concerns to the VR help desk. Linda Custis is actually the help desk representative that's going to help you with all your portal enrollments, with all of the automation you want to be sure you can get in and your access is current, she will be the person you will contact for that. Linda also handles the two-day training sessions so if anybody is in need of those, again you can send that in to the help desk and Linda will work with you to coordinate days convenient for you to come in for that training. Shada Roper and Raquel Donaldson will help you with some updates.

Raquel Donaldson: Good afternoon, everyone. This is (Raquel Donaldson). I just have two quick points. The current month of earning that we're seeing right now is January 2016. So that's a good thing.

 Also the (cost formulas), I just wanted to remind you to please have them sent directly to my attention. And if possible do not send them with your claim. Send them separately from your claim so I can receive it, get that information in the system to prove so we can start working any claims that have a VR closure date of October or up to the present.

 Also, if you're sending original claims, please try not to send them to the VR helpdesk. Do not send them to my attention or (Sheila Roper's) attention, unless you've already had a discussion with us. And you want to make sure that we're getting the claims and (then) we'll prioritize it based of when they're received.

 When they do come in, they get stamped. So we want to make sure that it's received, opened up, stamped and sent out for the technicians to work on. So when you send them to (Sheila) and I, they may be put on hold for a while because of everything else we're dealing with.

 Like I said, if you – if you've already had a discussion with us and we know they're coming, then by all means send them to our kitchen. Otherwise, send them directly to the (PO lot) for (this tree of) address if you're doing overnight shipping. That's all I have for today. (Danielle).

Danielle Armstrong: Michelle, you want to open up for questions and answers if nobody has anything else?

Michelle Laisure: Absolutely. Operator, let's open up our phone lines for questions. I'm looking at the chat lines to see if we have any questions on there and there was only one and I don't know if Rob or Desiree, you have any dates or ideas in mind, so when will the virtual job fair occur for the western region?

Rob Pfaff: Thanks, Michelle, and thanks for the question. We are in the process of switching the virtual job fair execution, so to speak, from, we're converting it from what used to be under the bas contract to maximus so we're taking it step by step. We do intend to hit all of the states but in terms of giving any kind of specific information regarding when we would hit the west coast, I don't think that's been discussed yet. You know, I don't know if Sabra wants to weigh in on that or not but we do intend to have full coverage for the virtual job fairs.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Rob, for that explanation. Operator, do we have any calls from our listeners?

Operator: As a reminder, to ask a question please press star followed by the number 1 on your telephone key pad. And we do have one question from the line of Eugenia Cox.

Eugenia Cox: Hi, this is Eugenia cox from Oregon VR I have two questions. One, on the portal for Katie, is there any possibility of extending the time before it times out on you?

Katie Striebinger: No, unfortunately, there is not. That is a strict requirement we need to follow.

Eugenia Cox: It's just inconvenient, when you are working on trying to go back and forth it seems to time out fairly quickly. What is it, 5 minutes?

Katie Striebinger: You just have to -- you have to keep working in there. If you leave the screen and you don't touch your mouse for a while it will time you out. You just need to keep clicking around or moving your mouse a little bit if you know you are going to be on the static screen. That will keep you from timing out.

Eugenia Cox: I thought, well, can't hurt to ask, right?

Katie Striebinger: If we could have, we would have.

Eugenia Cox: then about general, about the cost reimbursement claims, the monthly cost clearance reports in the mail and I go through, I make it a point to go through every denial and I don't know about anybody else, but we just consistently had mistake after mistake on there as far as how claims were denied or that they were denied at all. And the reason it got to me this last time, there was two or three of them of the denial that said the person either never got benefits or they were denied benefits and the problem is they are in the portal showing that they have a ticket and that the ticket is available or is declined to us. These are basically mistakes that are happening and I have to literally go through with a fine-toothed comb to all of our denials. There's so many mistakes. And when you have to take the time to submit the problem and tell them why you think it's wrong, that takes a tremendous amount of time away from what we do. So I just wanted to point that out that if -- i don't know if it's getting worse and it was, I have at least two or three each month and there's really they absolutely make no sense as to the reasons for the denial. And people may think, well, what's wrong with the denial being wrong, it makes a tremendous amount of difference for us because when we answer something in our ticket tracker system, how it's denied will determine whether we continue to track that person. So you tell us that they never got benefits, our system is never going it track that claim but we know that they have benefits.

Danielle Armstrong: Hi, Eugenia this is Danielle when you have those that come up on your listing by all means please send it back to the help desk for review because we have been doing 100 percent review of the claims and we haven't seen a whole lot of that, so please send those in to our attention so we can make sure that they are being handled properly and also make sure it's not a discrepancy between what you are seeing in the portal and what our technicians are seeing in the system so we can ensure there are no issues on either end.

Eugenia Cox: Well we can only see what's in the portal. We have no idea what you guys are looking at.

Danielle Armstrong: I understand that. That's why you need to send those in so we can make sure if there is a discrepancy it's not something we need to correct.

Eugenia Cox: Yeah, you and I had this discussion about, I just asked a general question, why is this happening so often? And I asked this because people are new, you know, and you had mentioned that every one of the new people their claims are getting reviewed before they go out.

Danielle Armstrong: They are. If you have any by all means send them in so we can determine where the problem is and eliminate it.

Eugenia Cox: The other question is, and I keep asking this over and over again, the cost reimbursement training that was done in 2011 was good training. It hit all aspects of cost reimbursement, not just social security or bas, it involved, it was a collaboration between VR, it was a class with MAXIMUS and Social Security and I've asked continuously if we could update that training and provide it as a webinar and I wish that somebody would please possibly give me an answer. I ask at MAXIMUS all the time and I am told they are only supposed to be working on Ticket to Work, they don't do cost reimbursement, even though that training is on their web site. Can we please look at that training? It was valuable training, it gave everyone's point of view from how to find that claim to how to process it. I've taken the two-day training with social security and it's all about what happens to that claim after it getting to social security.

Danielle Armstrong: I will definitely take that back and get back to you directly regarding that training. I have all the folks in the room and I will be sure to get back to you.

Eugenia Cox: Thank you.

Michelle Lasiure: Operator, our next question please?

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Megan Stevens.

Megan Stevens: Hi, this is Megan from California. I had a quick question about section 301k, I know we used to receive notices from social security when there was a section 301 case that was receiving services from VR and we aren't receiving those notices any more. What will it take to get that process back?

Michelle Laisure: Can you repeat your question? We have your 301 --.

Megan Stevens: In California we used to receive a notice from social security about any cases that were receiving section 301 services that were receiving services from the department of rehabilitation. And we haven't received any of those in some time and I was wondering if that was a process that was in place nationwide or if that was something that was done regionally and where to go to start that process back up again because 301 cases have sort of a shorter turn around to get a cost reimbursement claim in for them.

Social Security: This was a net is you used to receive from the same folks that do the payments here at SSA

Megan Stevens: No, it was more like the local social security offices.

Social Security: Okay, that's what we were talking about. We'll have to check and see because as far as the operating procedures are concerned, we weren't aware there was a change. We'll look at what's in writing and contact some folks and find out if anything has changed. We normally are notified when something like that changes.

Megan Stevens: Okay. I do have one other question about the electronic claims processing. I was wondering if there will be different levels of security or different levels of access that we could designate to the portal users in our state, if we expand it to more users we have some concerns about all users being able to access the cost reimbursement, the electronic claims processes that will be in the portal. Is there any discussion about different levels of access within the portal?

Social Security: We actually had a discussion at the meeting we were at prior to this about access, but we haven't made final decisions. Katie, you have a note of that, right?

Katie Striebinger: Sure do.

Social Security: Okay. We would want that as well.

Katie Striebinger: Did you also send an email to the help desk regarding your 301 inquiry, that we have your contact information so we can be sure we do get an answer back to you? We will make it available to everyone, but just so we can get back to you as well.

Megan Stevens: Sure. Yeah, i'll do that. Thank you guys very much.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you. These are great follow-up agenda items for our next call.
Operator, do we have another listener that's called in?

Operator: Again, as a reminder, to ask a question press star followed by the number 1 on your telephone key pad. Your next question comes from the line of Donna Osborn.

Donna Osborn: Hi, this is donna from Kentucky. I wanted to follow-up about the regional job fair. I was sad we weren't in the region but because we border West Virginia will that information come out to other states.

Rob Phaff: I'm sorry, where are you from again?

Donna Osborn: Kentucky and we border West Virginia so there might be some cross over that our people might be interested in.

Rob Pfaff: Yeah, I appreciate that. I think the approach, we're trying to align the states with the SSA regions, which is so essentially with our first -- I guess I should say our second virtual job fair, instead of taking a national approach we're targeting New York and Philadelphia regions. So what will probably happen is when we include Kentucky it will probably align with that particular region. I believe, is that -- I'm curious whether Kentucky is Atlantic region, I'm not sure, but at any rate we would like to take states within certain regions and then roll out the next phase of the virtual job fair. So we'll get to everybody, that's for sure. Like I said, we're still, this is a first -- this is sort of a transitionary job fair where we're in the process of switching over to our new ticket program manager so they are evaluating a lot of the things we're doing. It's a smaller approach with a few states and so they're going to take the things that they see and identify through this process and implement them moving forward in whatever vehicle or approach they have selected to execute the next virtual job fairs.

Rob Pfaff: Okay, Kentucky generally falls into the south but I just, like we would have one office, they would be more interested in what's going on in West Virginia than they would be the south. It depends on where you are located.

Rob Pfaff: Your point is well taken in that you are a border state and so forth so we have to kind of align this strategically to some extent. We know other states will want to participate, we will get to those states but stay tuned, we'll have more information for you. We're in the throes of trying to get all the details nailed down for this next scheduled event, which is scheduled in march, then once we get through that we'll likely have more information about how we plan to roll this out moving forward.

Rob Pfaff: Okay, thanks.

Noreen: This is Noreen calling from Utah.

Michelle Laisure: Welcome.

Noreen: Thanks. I just have a question about the state verification system. We just barely -- by way of history our state just moved over to a new case management system last year so in our we're using the aware data base system for case management and we are noticing we get a high number of false positives indicating the individuals are severing social security benefits when the client will say they are not. So this seems to be coming through the system and what we've been through is we manually submit those to our region by fax and we sometimes get different information.
So our question is why the difference that we get different information and any suggestions about the false positives you can alert us to?

Michelle Laisure: We actually don't have anybody here that has expertise with that. The regional is outsourced but we can reach out to them with this issue.

Noreen: Yeah, that would be great, or should I contact our region directly? I'm not sure the best procedure to resolve it will.

Michelle Laisure: Yeah, they would be the ones that would be able to give you more valuable information if you would like to reach out to them directly that would be great.

Noreen: Okay, I will do it. Thanks.

Operator: There are no additional audio questions.

Michelle Laisure: Tthank you, operator. For all of our listeners on the call today, please for those states that are lucky to be in our first or second virtual job fair, we would like to remind you to please identify your beneficiary that are job ready and are definitely available to work in our target location. So that is key, that they are available to work in our target location. And, again, as ticket coordinator we look forward to your support and your local rehab offices and helping our beneficiaries to do three things: register for the call, understand and feel comfortable with navigating on the platform. Many of our beneficiaries are very comfortable with technology but we do also know any new environment takes a while to understand the different groups that are available, how to communicate with the recruiters that will be at our virtual job fair so we want to give them an opportunity to excel once they participate on the day of the job fair. And then the third, again, is that you are feeling comfortable with the technology, that they will be ready to ice the chat lines, the blogs, whatever is set up there on the virtual job fair platform that they have had an opportunity to test it and feel comfortable with that. We look forward to your support and your participation in that. Again, registering, navigating the job fair and communicating with the employers during the virtual job fair.
That concludes our communication and our items here from TPM, any closing remarks from social security?

Rob Pfaff: No, we're good, thank you very much.

Michelle Laisure: Great. Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. That concludes our call, please. Remember to send your suggestions for agenda items and share with you to the VR help desk so we can plan accordingly for our March agenda. Have a good evening, everyone, thank you. This concludes our call.

(END OF CALL)