

Jocelyn Greenidge: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to today's Quarterly All VR Call. I would like to introduce myself to you. My name is Jocelyn Greenidge. I am the TPM Program Manager, and I want to welcome you all to the call today. I want to go over a few key staffing changes on the TPM Program. That's why I'm greeting you all today.

First of all, I wanted to let you guys know that we had a change in the Ticket Operations team leadership. The Ticket Operations Manager, Jennelle Bratcher, is no longer with the program. She has moved on and we have promoted our previous EN Payments Manager, Kimberly Cutler. She will now serve as the Ticket Operations Manager. You haven't had a chance to talk to Kimberly in the past. She will now oversee the whole Ticket Operations Department, which includes the EN Payments and the VR Payment Manager as well. We also have an additional staffing change. We have Keitra Hill who previously served on the TPM Program in a variety of roles, comes to us after recently having a stint in EN Training and Development. She will now serve as the VR Payment Manager. We want to welcome Keitra here in her new role as the VR Payment Manager. And I wanted to turn the next couple of minutes over to Keitra so she can introduce herself give a little background as the new VR Payment Manager. Keitra.

Keitra Hill (Moderator): Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you again for joining today's Quarterly All VR Call. As Jocelyn mentioned, I am currently the VR Payment Manager. A lot of you know me from working with me when I was an Account Manager in EN Development to when I was the Manager. And then now I'm in this role, so I'm looking forward to working with all of you in this capacity. Thank you again for joining today's call. Before we begin, we want to go over the agenda and some quick housekeeping items. I'd like to review that with you next. So if we could go to the next slide.

Here is our agenda. Again, Jocelyn, thank you for that welcome. I will be the moderator for today's call. After reviewing these housekeeping rules with you, we will hear from Katie Striebinger, Social Security Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Branch Chief, to go over information about inactive Portal users. Next, we'll hear from Raquel Donaldson who is the Social Security Administration's Vocational Rehabilitation Team Senior Program Analyst. And she'll be going over some updates in regard to the Fiscal Year 2023 Cost Formula updates and then reminders. And then lastly, we'll have our Q & A session. So moving to the next slide to go over some housekeeping items. Thank you.

One thing to remember is to please remain muted during this call unless you are called upon by the facilitator. Please feel free to ask any questions in the MS Team's chat section. If you are joining via phone and you wish to ask a question, we ask that you raise your hand utilizing star, five. You will be unmuted by the facilitator and then you'll need to press star, six to unmute yourself on your end. Next, please ask any questions. Ask questions each time you are called upon by the facilitator. Additional questions that are not covered during this call can be sent to VR.Helpdesk@ssa.gov and those questions will be answered — some during the live event, and those not answered at that time, again, after the event.

One thing to note is that closed captioning is available for participants who are joining using the Microsoft Teams application or utilizing the separate closed caption link that's been provided in the chat. To turn on the closed caption in Teams, go to the three ellipses at the top of the

Microsoft Teams window and click on more actions. Next, scroll down to the list to turn on live captions. When using the link options, paste the link in the browser and it will open in a separate window to view closed captions. Thank you in advance for your participation in today's call. Next, we will hear from Katie Striebinger regarding inactive Portal users. Katie, over to you.

Katie Striebinger: Thank you, Keitra, and welcome to the VR workload. We are really excited to have you with us. Good afternoon, everyone. I just wanted to talk about inactive Portal users. This is something that we've been aware of and trying to work toward. I wanted to bring it up here on the call first. You could hear it from us first. SSA is projecting its information systems a top priority.

As you are all aware, the Ticket Portal uses the highest level of security available to the agency, and it allows VRs to safely and securely do business with SSA. Portal access as it was designed should be limited to individuals who have a specific business need and plan to access the application regularly. The Portal was intended to be something for a handful of specific users who needed to go in and perform business functions. We started to notice recently that there are a lot of inactive Ticket Portal users in our system. And we started to question whether the users are no longer with the agency or had a need in the past and no longer have it. So we are doing an audit on our side of all the users we have for VR agencies in the Portal.

Starting May 1, we're going to start removing Portal access for users who have not accessed the Portal in the last 180 days. If you are an active Portal user, you should be accessing the application at least once every 90 days. So we felt that six months was a sufficient time to make sure that all the users who were appropriately using the system were in there. So if you're not sure of your status in the Portal, if you don't remember the last time you logged into the Portal, you need to take the following actions immediately. First of all, if you haven't been in the Portal, you can't do this first step. But anyone you have actively in the Portal should go in and verify the Portal users for your organization. You would probably want to sign one POC for this. Toward the bottom on the main menu, there is a directory of information about your EN or SVR link. If you go in there and that pops open, you will see all the users we have marked as Portal users for your agency.

You should go through that and make sure that anyone you know who is listed as a Portal user, who still needs that access, goes and logs in. And if they try and they're suspended but need access, contact the VR Help Desk so we can reactivate them. If there are employees that you know do not need to be in the Portal and you see them listed, please also contact us and we'll go in and remove them without them having to do that. Your agency and us will make sure that we have an appropriate list when we're all done. This information I just went through, we're going to send it out in a blast this week so you can read it.

If you need an extension, if you need more time, if you're still working through the list of employees, I'm going to refer to the email. Reach back out to the VR Help Desk. This is what we're here for. It's to work with you to clean this all up.

As a reminder, you should contact the VR Help Desk if you have any change in key personnel so that we can update our system. If someone has left the agency, but they still at one point had access or were marked as a key personnel in our system, please make sure you're letting us know that they're no longer with your agency. We need to make sure that we protect our system and that someone who has left your agency can't call the Help Desk and ask for their Portal

access to be reinstated, when they have no business being in the Ticket Portal. So right now, after 90 days of inactivity, this is automatic. The Portal will suspend you. We're taking the further step in 180 days; so six months total if you have not accessed the Portal, we will remove you. If you do find out after that time that when you go to log in and you can't get in, contact the VR Help Desk, and we will re-enroll you in the Portal. So please don't fear that you're out of the Portal forever. But we are going to have to work through a process to make sure that only appropriate users are in the system. I'll be on at the end of the call if anybody has any questions. But like I said, this will come out in a blast. The VR Help Desk will be here to work with you through any questions you have. And making sure, together that we have the right personnel in the Portal. All right, Keitra back to you.

Keitra Hill: Okay thank you Katie. So next we will hear from Raquel Donaldson regarding the Fiscal Year Cost Formula as well as an update on the PID. Raquel, please go ahead.

Raquel Donaldson: Thank you Keitra. Good afternoon, everyone. I just have two quick announcements. The first is in regard to Fiscal Year '23 Cost Formula. Right now we have a select few VRs that are actually testing the new cost formula. They had the meeting, which was absolutely awesome. We appreciate everyone who is currently assisting us with this, giving feedback in regard to whether the cost formula is actually working. It's actually six VRs, seven total.

So once they all complete the cost formula for fiscal year '23 and they submit it and we've met again, then hopefully we'll get that great let's go with this. And then we'll be reaching out to all of the VRs. Again, there will be a question-and-answer session at that time just to make sure everyone understands the instructions for the Fiscal Year '23 Cost Formula. So, right now I'm just saying there is light at the end of the tunnel in regard to the Fiscal Year '23 Cost Formula. I just want to remind every VR to not hold onto your claims. You should be submitting them, just like you would any other claim. Even if it has to do with fiscal year '23. We do not want you to hold onto it. If the technician reviews it and sees that it will need the fiscal year '23 data, that's fine. We just place it in diary and then it becomes our responsibility once your cost formula has been submitted to get the claim process. But please, please, please do not hold onto any of your claims and then later on request a timely waiver, something like that. We've been saying from beginning, do not hold onto any of it. You're right, we should have a party when it's all done.

Second announcement is just a reminder about when you are submitting emails to the VR Help Desk. I believe Cognosante has requested in the very beginning that you include your PID. The PID, which again is the same as your DUNS number. And this helps all of us who are involved with the VR Help Desk to look up your information. The more you submit, the better. If you know Social Security numbers and the beneficiary's name, date of birth, whatever information you have, the better for us. It makes things much quicker for us to investigate what you're looking for and get back to you to give you responses. You all know that you who've worked with me that I'm big on customer service and turnaround times. So it's just going to help the entire VR Help Desk team the more information that you provide to them. Believe it or not, that is absolutely all that I had for this call. So I'm going to turn it back over to Keitra. Thank you.

Keitra Hill: Thank you Katie. Thank you, Raquel, for those updates. So now we're going to transition into our Q & A period. So as a reminder, to ask your question over the phone, please

raise your hand on teams by dialing star, five. And if you're called upon, you'll be unmuted by the facilitator. And then you'll need to press star, six to unmute yourself. So for participants that are using the Teams app, you can again ask your questions into the chat window and raise your hand. Those questions will be read aloud and responded to by either Katie or Raquel. So Katherine if you could, let's go to the raised hands at this time.

Katherine Jett: Hi Keitra, we don't have anyone at this time with their hands raised.

Keitra Hill: Okay.

Katherine Jett: Oh. I just saw one. We have Eugenia Cox. Eugenia, I'm going to give you access as well as everyone else to their video and audio when you ask a question. You'll just need to turn your audio and your video on. And you can ask your question Eugenia.

Eugenia Cox: Hello. One, I want to thank Raquel for updating all the directory information. She has been a trooper through that whole thing. Two, quick question. And I think I brought this up. I actually haven't brought it up at all. When we go in and get a diary on an individual and you know, I look at all the claims that have come through for that one individual person. But when we get a diary request for a justification, and we don't know. We are assuming that the claim is going to be paid. But I've noticed that some diary requests have been in there when they're going just be denied. Do they look at the claims first to see before they request us to do a justification or a — I know a PVR has already been determined? Do the technicians look to see if that claim is just going to be denied? That's a lot of work for us to do when they're just going to be denied.

Raquel Donaldson: Hi Eugenia, it's Raquel. That's a great question and it's one that we have pointed out to the technicians because yes, they are supposed to actually try to process the claim to the very end. And then once they get to the very end with their, it's something called the payment screen. It should show them there, nine times out of 10. It should show them whether or not this is something that's going to be paid or if it's going to end up being a 610 denial.

So this is basically just a matter of the technician paying more attention to what's going on, and thank you for bringing this up. We've had meetings since then. I saw your email before in regard to this. And if there's anyone else, any other VR that runs into that situation, what Eugenia is saying is — if other claims have been receiving 950, I think that's it. If other claims have been received for the same beneficiary, 950 approvals, then nine times out of 10 that next claim is going to be a 610 because that means we've exhausted the funds for that beneficiary. So that's a red flag right there.

If you see something like that, please send an email like Eugenia did to the VR Help Desk, to say hey, I've noticed you've requested information from us; however, the last claim for this beneficiary was paid 950. So that 950 approval is really important, and a red flag for you all to say, hold on, I shouldn't be doing all this work. Let me go back in and let me ask the VR Help Desk to research it before I do anything. And that's not a problem.

Again, it's a teaching moment for us as well, so please do not feel like you're ratting someone out. Because guess what? You're saving us work and yourself a whole lot of work. So we appreciate it if you let us know. Because again, we can just go back and talk to the technicians and point out what they're doing wrong in regard to processing.

Eugenia Cox: Okay, thank you.

Raquel Donaldson: Thank you.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Eugenia. Right, if you have any questions, if you'll please press star, five if you're on the phone. Or raise your hand if you're on Teams. And we'll call on you. We don't have anyone with their hand raised at this time. If you'd like to go to the chat.

Keitra Hill: Yeah. I believe there was a question a bit earlier. Emani, did you see a question in the chat earlier that I may have missed? If you could read that aloud?

Emani Cain: Yes. Raquel just answered Eugenia's question that was in the chat. And then we have another one from Donna. She asks should the PID be in the subject line?

Raquel Donaldson: Hi Donna. Obviously, it doesn't matter where you put it. I do notice some VRs put it in the subject line. But as long as it's somewhere in the subject line or the body of the email, just letting the Help Desk analyst know your PID. That's perfect. Of course we know we can't put SSNs in the subject line. But a PID, yeah. That would be great.

Emani Cain: And that was all the questions in the chat.

Katherine Jett: Again if you would like to ask a question, if you're on the phones, please press star, five to raise your hand and if you're on Teams you'll go to the react icon at the top and just click raise hand. It's next to the react icon. Click raise your hand. We'll call on you to ask a question. And we have Eugenia Cox with a question. Just one moment please. Eugenia, you are ready to go. If you'll turn your video and audio on.

Eugenia Cox: Oh I put it in the chat. I wanted to find out if there is any word on when the Timely Progress Reviews are going to start again? I've been letting people know that they will start someday. And we want to make sure that we get training out and be, have people be prepared when these things will start.

Katie Striebinger: Hi Eugenia. I have the same answer. We will give you so much notice before SSA is even about to start doing anything TPR related. We will give everyone advance notice, so you'll have plenty of time to prepare. But everyone should be working like we could start them any moment. Right? But at this point I don't have anything in the imminent future.

Eugenia Cox: Okay. Thank you.

Katherine Jett: We have two more, Keitra, with their hands raised. We have Daniel Upp. Daniel you are now moved up to a presenter if you want to turn your audio and video on.

Daniel Upp: Hi, I'm Daniel Upp with Wisconsin. I'm really new to this position. And I was wondering if there's any training or websites that you could point me to as a newbie starting out. We kind of only have one contact at our agency. And I took the position because the previous one left, so I'm kind of in the dark about a lot of stuff and what's going on.

Raquel Donaldson: Hi Daniel, it's Raquel. Unfortunately, right now we don't have any type of training. However, what I can do for you, and what I've done for newbies in the past is I can email you the Power Point presentation that we used to use when we did do training. Once you read over that, if you have any questions, we can do a one-on-one and connect.

Also, the state VR directory. This is one of the reasons I update the state VR directory. All the SSA coordinators are on there, and those are your resources. Those are people that you can reach out to. They have been awesome in the past helping newbies in regard to questions because they're on the side that I'm not on. They see things in the Portal that you may have questions or thoughts on that I can't answer. There are things that you all do on your side that we know nothing about, even the VR Help Desk. So I always highly, highly recommend that you reach out to your counterparts at the other state VR agencies.

And I will be sending out the updated directory to you all, hopefully by tomorrow. And if there's anyone that has not submitted any updated information, it's a little bit late. When you get the new updated version, if you still see something in there that needs to be changed, I'd still be more than happy to go in and change that information for you.

Daniel Upp: That would be great. Thank you so much.

Raquel Donaldson: You're welcome, Daniel.

Shada Roper: Good afternoon, this is Shada Roper. Along with the PowerPoint, the handbook also should be sent. Katie and I are obviously still working on several updates to the handbook so that we follow the laws and policies. For all those that are new, you need to be able to access the handbook. So we also have an updated version of the handbook with information that has been updated about COVID. That goes along with the PowerPoint. Also for the newbies, Katie and I are working on training. But because I am the training person, I can always give you one-on-one, going through the PowerPoint. But we'd have to schedule and set up a time where I would be able to go through that with you.

And yes, Sarah, I will send you whatever we've had from since the information has changed with COVID. Once again, sorry Rod Stewart. Rod Stewart, not as good as him, but it seems I've somehow accepted to be his singing partner.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Shada. We have another individual that has a question. Donna Osborne. Donna you are now a presenter. If you want to turn your audio and video on. And ask your question.

Donna Osborne: Sorry, took me a little while to figure that out. I just wanted to let you know what I'm seeing and ask do we know why this is happening? On one time I've gotten three different diary letters on the same claim, with just different dates on them. But basically saying the same thing. I've had that happen on more than one claim that I've submitted. I'm just wondering what might be happening.

Raquel Donaldson: Hey Donna it's Raquel. Can you send that to me at the VR Help Desk? The only thing I can think of is if someone has extended your diary for whatever reason, then every time they extend it, that may be the reason that a new diary will go out for you. Other than that, I can't think of why you should be receiving a new diary.

Donna Osborne: Yeah, I'll send them to you.

Raquel Donaldson: Let me know so I can look into that for you. And thanks Donna. I'm actually reading some comments from the chat. If there's anyone who is requesting a copy of the

training and the handbook, can you please email the VR Help Desk? I don't want to miss anyone in the chat. Thank you.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Donna. Thank you, Raquel. We have Kimberly Valrey. Kimberly, you are now a presenter, if you want to turn your audio and video on and ask your question.

Kimberly Valrey: Can you hear me?

Katherine Jett: Yes ma'am.

Kimberly Valrey: Okay thank you. Yeah, I'm also like the gentleman before who said he was new. I live here in Arizona. I do the claims for the state of Arizona. And my question also is to Raquel, if she could also send me over some information or anybody that has information that will help. I've been doing it as temp for a year so I would like to get some information, if that's possible. I appreciate it. Thank you.

Katherine Jett: Thank you. Thank you, Kimberly.

Raquel Donaldson: Yes, Kim. That's no problem. Again, if anyone needs any type of information like that, like we were saying, the PowerPoint or the VR handbook, just email the VR Help Desk and we will definitely make sure you get that, as well as the updated copy of the state VR directory.

Kimberly Valrey: Okay thank you. I do — sorry I do have one more question. I don't know if this is the right platform. Like I said, I'm new. I'm dealing with VRCERs. Can you talk anything about the VRCER claims?

Raquel Donaldson: What's your specific question about VRCER?

Kimberly Valrey: Well.

Raquel Donaldson: What it is?

Kimberly Valrey: I know they're not like the regular claims where we do the wages and everything. But it's kind of hard when you send over the VRCERs. A lot of them are getting denied and we don't really have that much control over them. Is there any way that we could get more information with the VRCERs? The majority of them are being denied, disallowed because I guess they're different than the regular ones. So I'm not that familiar with the VRCERs, although I do them. How can we catch it so we can get paid for those VRCERs? Or is there any other way we could work those?

Raquel Donaldson: No there's not. Actually, there's no guarantee honestly with any type of claim that you're doing, whether you're doing VRCER or whether you're using earnings information that you have information on that you submit to us. For VRCER, something that we stress is that VRCER is no guarantee that the claim will be paid. VRCER is just letting the VR and SSA know that there are at least three out of four quarters of earnings at or above non-blind SGA or if the beneficiary blind, then blind SGA. That is all it's telling us. With Social Security we have access to monthly earnings. That is information that for the most part most VRs do not have.

Very rarely will I see one or two VRs that may have monthly information. The first thing that we are looking for is nine out of 12 months of earnings. That is the first thing that the technicians

and analysts are looking for on our end. And VRCER may say to you, hey Kim, I see that you have three out of four quarters for this beneficiary. Three out of four quarters is not guarantee that there's nine out of 12 months of earnings. So again, VRCER is a tool that's used to submit earnings. I mean I'm sorry, to submit claims. But there's no guarantee with that the claim is going to be paid just using VRCER.

Kimberly Valrey: Right, thank you. Thank you.

Raquel Donaldson: You're welcome.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Kimberly. Thank you, Raquel. We have Eugenia Cox who has a question. Eugenia you're a presenter. If you want to activate your audio and video and ask your question.

Eugenia Cox: Hello again. We're starting to use the Work Number a little bit more and we're actually using a batch format of the Work Number or the Equifax batched information. When we submit a claim using the Work Number, would we in the comment section put the Work Number data and then do we print out a fax cover and send that? It would be more of like because the Equifax information, wage information is more real time. Is that something you accept? And do you want us to fax that as additional wage information? Or how would you like us to do that?

Raquel Donaldson: Yes, we definitely accept Work Number information as verified. So you can send that, like you do anything else. Any type of other document that you're sending, submitting with the claim. So you would fax it in and include it. And definitely put a comment in the remarks box that you're submitting that information.

Eugenia Cox: Okay, so just put like wage information will be faxed or something?

Raquel Donaldson: Exactly. Exactly. And just, not just for you Eugenia, but for everyone. When you are faxing in wage information after you upload a claim, keep in mind that if the technician just sees the claim there, they're going to process it, unless you put in the notes at that time that you're sending something else over. And even when you do that, you have a limited time to do it.

If you're faxing something, if you upload the claims Monday, we're expecting you to turn around and upload the backup information as well, the earnings information, whatever your wage is, your work employment, any of that. That needs to go as well. Otherwise, if you've noticed, the turnaround time for the technicians and analysts to review the claims has been much, much, much quicker than in the past, where you may have had extra time. But right now we're saying do not submit a claim if you know it's going to take you a few days to gather up the earnings information as well. Wait until you have everything.

Eugenia Cox: Okay and then one more question. When go in, you have a diary, and you go in to request the fax cover letter that goes with it. Sometimes I'll forget that I printed one and I'll print it again. And then it shows on there that I've printed two fax cover sheets. And, and then we send in the justification on one of them. And it's hell because I think they're thinking we're sending something else because we requested the fax twice. The fax cover sheet. Is that the case? Or I think we would only be sending one justification or one PVR. But sometimes we print more than one fax cover sheet. So I'm not sure if the technicians know that it's the same, or you see where I'm going with this?

Raquel Donaldson: Katie, do you have an answer for that? I thought you should be able to print more than one fax cover sheet. And it all goes through, correct, or no?

Katie Striebinger: Yeah, once it's faxed in, it automatically attaches to the work case. So if you make one fax cover sheet, but then you don't use it., the technician should only see the one you actually faxed in.

Eugenia Cox: Yeah, and it does show that you've printed off two cover sheets. So it kind of logs it every time you print one. And I didn't know if they thought we were sending in more than one, because I've seen it just sit there for a while. And even though it shows we faxed, it does show on there that we faxed and when. But there's also another fax cover sheet that we didn't use that's sitting there blank. So I didn't know if they thought there was two things coming in. So it's not processed right away.

Katie Striebinger: We have one screen that shows you how many requested, and the status of them. But the screen that the staff uses is attached to the actual work case. So you know, they will only see the one you fax in. I can't speak to why it might take them longer to get to your claim unless you had a specific example. You know you could email the Help Desk and we could look in to see what happened, to make sure everybody knows what to do. But I don't. There should be nothing indicating to them that they need to wait because you're about to fax in something. There's nothing in the system that would make them think they need to wait.

Eugenia Cox: Yeah, and it's hard to explain because you guys can't see what we see in the Portal. I think what I'll do is when I see one, an example of one where it shows that there's been two fax cover sheets. I'll just send it to you, so you know what it is I'm talking about. I'll just send it to the Help Desk so you can see.

Katie Striebinger: Like I said, the technician only sees the one you actually fax in.

Eugenia Cox: Yeah.

Katie Striebinger: So I don't think that they're waiting. There's no way for them to know that you are about to send another one; or that you requested one and only sent, you requested two and only sent one. There's no way they can see that.

Eugenia Cox: Okay.

Katie Striebinger: Yeah. Because there's nothing to attach if you haven't faxed it in. So it's just like — you're right — it is a placeholder. And you can definitely see. You could go in there and just request all the fax cover sheets you wanted. As long as you get the number with the evidence, we're good.

Eugenia Cox: Okay. All right, thank you.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Eugenia. Thank you, Katie. We have Colleen Hart who has a question. Colleen you are a presenter, if you want to activate your video and audio to ask a question.

Colleen Hart: Hi. I'm fairly new. I've been doing this for I don't know, six weeks or so. And I've got a fairly good handle on it. But there's kind of a strange scenario where if we've got somebody that we've put in use and the date that the Ticket has gone in use is later than their

IPE went into effect because they actually got the Ticket later than we started the case. So the IPE date and it just — they don't all line up. So the Ticket start date is later. And maybe they've already started earning SGA before the Ticket went into effect. Do you start counting wages before the Ticket goes into effect? Or does it all start just went the Ticket starts?

Raquel Donaldson: Hi Colleen, it's Raquel. We start looking for wages. We look at two dates. We look at when the beneficiary becomes disabled and we look at the VR enter date. We're looking for the latter of the two dates. So whichever one happens second. That's when we start looking for SGA for earnings.

Colleen Hart: When you say the VR enter date, that's the date that we put it in use?

Raquel Donaldson: Yes.

Colleen Hart: Okay. So it's the end use date. Okay good. That's what I thought. I just wanted to make sure. And because we can't actually assign the Ticket until the Ticket is sent, mailed out. And that's what's happening in a few cases. We've started the case maybe in 2013 but the Ticket wasn't mailed until 2015. So the earliest we could put it in use was 2015. But they started earning wages in 2014. You don't count those wages in 2014?

Raquel Donaldson: No, we don't.

Colleen Hart: That's what I thought. Okay thank you.

Raquel Donaldson: The technician, when they get your claim, they're looking at what you're entering as the actual VR enter date. That date and then they're going into SSA's records to look to see when the beneficiary became disabled and they're using the later of those two dates.

Colleen Hart: The later of the two dates.

Raquel Donaldson: Yes, because the beneficiary could have started, came into the VR in 2020. But SSA says we didn't say this person was disabled until 2021. That's the date we use, 2021.

Colleen Hart: I gotcha, okay great. Thank you.

Raquel Donaldson: You're welcome.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Colleen. Thank you, Raquel. We'll go to the chat now with Emani.

Emani Cain: Yes, so we have one question from Shelly. This is in regard to the handbook. She wants to know if the handbook been revised since 2020.

Shada Roper: Good afternoon, Shelly. This is Shada. I'd have to check, but the thing is, we know we have updates. So we just want to make sure that you have everything that has happened. Because we've had blasts in between that from since 2020. And whenever we also send out a blast, we have to update that handbook. And make sure that it is in the handbook. So any blast that you've got in 2021 has to be in the handbook or any variation or any change. We must update it to the handbook. Currently Katie and I are working on several things that have not been completely updated. But anything that went out in a blast prior to this year and the end of last year, yes, it should be in the handbook. We're just working on certain things right

now that will not be available until we've come to some decisions. But blasts and things like that have been done. And we want to make sure that you have the most current information.

Katie Striebinger: I'm going to jump in Shada. The last book that we sent out was dated 2020. That is the last official handbook we have sent out.

Shada Roper: Okay.

Katie Striebinger: If you have that copy, you have the most current copy.

Shada Roper: Or for the people who said they're brand new and don't really know anything about what's happening, that they have a copy as well.

Katie Striebinger: And the provider handbook is also on the Ticket to Work website as well so you can access the most current copy there. We have that stored on the website. But if you need a copy, you can always reach out to the Help Desk.

Shada Roper: In addition, in 2020 we did national call where we did best practices for those of you who are new and need assistance with getting claims out. We also had a training via national call in 2020. We can also give you the slides for those as well.

Katherine Jett: Next question in the chat is from Warren. If the nine out of 12 months are not consecutive, do we still require documentation that the break in SGA is due to seasonal work?

Raquel Donaldson: Hi Warren. It has to be consecutive. So it has to be nine out of the 12 months. We can't control when the beneficiary is earning the earnings if that makes sense. So if it's nine out of 15 months, due to when they're earning that money. That claim will get denied. That's considered a 320 denial, meaning that the beneficiary has made nine months of earnings, but it's not within a 12-month period.

Katherine Jett: All right. Do have any more questions in the chat?

Emani Cain: We have one more question from Carla. How do we access blasts that were sent before we started? Are they collected somewhere?

Katie Striebinger: This is Katie. I want to give a shout out to maybe a portion of the website that not everyone is aware of. We can send that out in a blast if that would help as well because I'm probably going to give you the wrong link over the phone. But if you go to the Ticket to Work website, there is a section where we store, and anybody else on TPM if you can tell the staff where it is.

But we actually have an archive, an Events Archive, and that has the notes and slides if we had any from any call we've ever had. And most of the information that we give out is on these quarterly calls. So I encourage you to go there to the events archive. We post the recap there. We also actually have transcripts that you can read through or listen to. So I do encourage you if you're new, I would say take a chunk of time. Don't listen to it all at once, but you know that's a good place, that's Events Archive.

And there is a VR section on the website. So I would go to the Ticket to Work website and start there. And like Raquel said, you have a lot of partners who can probably give you more information on the way they use the policies. But if you want to hear the directions SSA has

given, that would be the best way to get it. If we have sent a blast out, we talk about it, and we talk through it on our quarterly calls. We always read through them.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Katie. And I think if you look in the chat, Keitra, I did post where the archives are. We keep those up to date. That's a good place to go.

Katherine Jett: Thank you. Emani, do we have any other questions in the chat?

Emani Cain: Yep, another one from Jill. How can I get signed up for blasts?

Raquel Donaldson: Hey Jill, it's Raquel. You're signed up. When Shada says "blast", she means the emails that come from I think it says Ticket to Work subscription. We call it GovDelivery. Like the email you received yesterday reminding you of today's All VR Call, that's a blast. That's just an internal word that we use for emails that we send out, announcements that we sent out to the VRs.

Emani Cain: And we have one more in the chat from Amanda. What if they have nine months within 12 months, but they are not consecutive. Would that be denied as well?

Raquel Donaldson: Hi Amanda, it's Raquel. No, that nine out of 12 months is what we're looking for. So for example if you're saying January, February they have earnings at or above SGA. Maybe March, the next three months they don't. Or you skip a month here or there. As long as we can count nine out of 12 before we reach — once we hit that year mark, we count nine months of having the earnings, then that's what we mean when we say nine out of 12 months. It does not have to be January through September. You're welcome.

Shada Roper: And that information is also in the PowerPoint that Raquel will send you. So we show you on that PowerPoint how you can have nine out of 10, nine out of 11, or nine out of 12, or nine consecutive months. So it's all in that training and that PowerPoint.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Shada. We have two on the phone that have questions. We have an Eric Schmidt. Eric you are a presenter if you want to turn on your audio and video, ask your question.

Eric Schmidt: Hello. This may be a take it back to Rob. The question is an advocacy question actually. Notice recently we have a little uptake in denials, and have attributed them to some very suspect data from SWISS, the State Wage Interchange System for wages from other states. I basically found a number of ways that we're getting incorrect data and they look like they would be sufficient SGA wages and then they turn out to either be duplications or errors.

So I guess my question is, would SSA consider advocating for the states regarding the issues with SWISS? Again, that's coming from a federal partner agency and it's causing us to submit claims that turn out to be incorrect and are wasting our time, wasting your time. I reported it to SWISS and SWISS basically told us, thanks for letting us know. Yes, you're correct. There's a lot of problems. And there's nothing we can do about it. And so I'm just wondering if again, a purposeful purpose of SWISS is to use it for cost reimbursement. Whether or not Social Security would consider advocating that SWISS be responsible for the validity of the data they're sending. Again, it's causing substantial errors in terms of our cost reimbursement and probably other things as well.

Raquel Donaldson: Hi Eric, it's Raquel. You already know what I'm going to ask. Can you shoot me, Rob, and Katie, an email?

Eric Schmidt: Sure. Yep, I got about six different ways that they're messing it up. And it's actually mostly coming from other states that then submit it to the SWISS clearinghouse. And then the SWISS clearinghouse basically just passes it along. I can share with you how it's happening. But I can definitely tell you it's responsible for a number of our recent denials and I don't see a solution unless we can get them to really give us better data.

Raquel Donaldson: Yeah, that's definitely something that I'm sure Rob and Katie would want to look into.

Eric Schmidt: Thank you.

Raquel Donaldson: Thank you.

Katherine Jett: Thank you, Eric. We have one more individual question on the phone. Eugenia Cox, you are a presenter if you want to share your audio and video and ask your question.

Eugenia Cox: One quick question. Colleen's question prompted one that I've had for a very long time. The Ticket mail date isn't necessarily the date they became eligible for benefits. And I see the difference when I look at the state verification exchange system. You guys use the actual date of eligibility, right? Not necessarily the Ticket date when you're looking at paying the cost claims?

Raquel Donaldson: Right, we use the beneficiary eligibility date. Correct.

Eugenia Cox: Okay we don't. You don't necessarily go by the Ticket mail date?

Raquel Donaldson: No we're going to the technicians and analysts are going to the claim. And we're looking at what the VR has entered as the VR enter date. So what you have submitted as the VR enter date. And then we are going to the SSA system to see when they are actually considered disabled. And that is what we're using.

Eugenia Cox: Oh, so you use the entitlement date or the -

Raquel Donaldson: Entitlement date, correct.

Eugenia Cox: Wow.

Raquel Donaldson: Correct.

Eugenia Cox: Oh that's cool. That's like six months.

Raquel Donaldson: Right. Right.

Eugenia Cox: Oh cool, okay thank you.

Raquel Donaldson: You're welcome.

Katie Striebinger: I just want to make sure I chimed in. It's still really important that you try to assign the Ticket so that they can get medical CDR protection.

Eugenia Cox: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Katie Striebinger: I just wanted to make sure that didn't get lost. That you were like "oh I didn't need to bother".

Eugenia Cox: Oh no, no, no, no.

Katie Striebinger: No, no, no. Please, please.

Eugenia Cox: Yeah, we make sure that all the Tickets are assigned. And if not, we try to get them back. We usually don't find out that they're with somebody else until they go into plan. Because you know there are so many people that come through VR, we do make sure that we get the Ticket back. Or we work cooperatively with another state VR agency. Thank you.

Katherine Jett: Thank you Eugenia. At this time I'll turn it back over to Keitra.

Keitra Hill: Thank you Katherine, and thank you everyone for joining today's call. I would just like to say on behalf of the Ticket Program Manager, thank you again, Katie and Raquel, for your updates, and everyone for attending today's call and making it informative and interactive. There may be some questions that are in the chat that we have not quite covered, but we certainly will get back to you in the days coming to respond to those questions.

Looking ahead, our next All VR Call will be on Tuesday, July 11, at 1:00 p.m. Thank you for attending and have a good rest of your day. This All VR Call has now been concluded. Take care.