

General Announcements: Social Security Administration (SSA) announced that during last month's call there were several questions regarding the format including discussion about starting a separate call to address Cost Reimbursement payment questions. Since then, in response to feedback that an additional call was not desired, SSA sent an announcement that there will be no separate call. Instead, the All VR call will allocate time to address general Cost Reimbursement questions and issues that impact everyone. Specific transaction questions should be directed to the vrhelpdesk@ssa.gov. Also, feedback is invited regarding All VR Call agenda topics so please send these suggestions to the help desk as well.

Cost Reimbursement: Social Security commented about the status of the VR Handbook and that SSA is in the process of making updates. It is now under review and will be available soon. Also, regarding wage verification - information comes in to SSA from the State VR agencies that are using various state reporting systems and there is a lag time for when these wages can be verified by federal systems. This lag time seems to be more prevalent because claims are now being processed as they are received. SSA must have due diligence to verify that Trust fund dollars should be paid out. To assist states to gauge the status of their claims, SSA will let VRs know the current month of earnings information available.

Specific rules dictate that earnings must be verified in two ways – identity must be accurate, then earnings verified through a sequence – first by SSA, then through quarterly wage data.

Pending Claims List: Last month, anyone who had pending claims received an email and were asked to respond regarding their list of pending claims. Thanks to the responses, the list has been reduced by more than 200 claims. SSA understands the inconvenience of the current “paper heavy” process and potential for errors. It is important to review and respond to messages to address any issues (i.e. wrong SSN numbers). If you have not already done so, please review the email (sent Aug 20 or 24). If the message has been lost, please contact Raquel Donaldson at Raquel.L.Donaldson@ssa.gov. The Portal will eventually take care of all of these issues with upcoming enhancements. If you have not received a pending claim list – it means we do not have the claims. Please contact us through the VR help desk if your data shows claims that need to be addressed. The pending claim list should not have to go out every month. This is being done now to clean up everything that was received prior to Aug 1. When you receive your Case Clearance report each month, if you still see errors please contact the VR help desk. The month of quarterly earnings available is currently July. The next report will be available in October.

Resubmittal and Reconsideration: Social Security explained the differences. Resubmittal is to submit a claim that was previously denied because of SGA reasons. Reconsideration is to appeal a claim that was denied because of a benefits issue not related to SGA. Reconsideration must include remarks/reasons for appealing the original decision. The explanation resulted in many questions and confusion related to differences in these claims and how they are handled. SSA will respond with written clarification.

Portal Usage: Currently 66 VR agencies are approved, which is the majority of state agencies participating in Cost Reimbursement. The four territories plus six others are not in the Portal. Four agencies need suitability, and two need the mySSA account. SSA is pleased that most SVRAs are in the Portal or diligent to pursue the processes needed for approval. SSA appreciates all efforts taken to make this transition.

IVR: Social Security understands the challenge caused by loss of the IVR. There will not be resources to reinstate the IVR in 2016 or foreseeable future. Some states have centralized this process, however that may not be possible for others. Please consider adding more people to the Portal to meet your business needs, as SSA does not plan to limit the number of Portal users. Another option would be to

pursue an agreement with SSA to receive data. SSA has data agreements with some states and perhaps ORDES could look into what states have such agreements and provide further information.

Portal Updates: Ticket Portal User Guide Version 4 was released this past Saturday. One change was made based on comments regarding the analysis files. The Appendix chart has been resorted and rearranged so that the codes are in the same order states are used to. The intent of the return file is for states to receive the exact fields they are used to receiving. Along with that, there are new codes added to give further information, but states are not required to use them, so no additional programming is required. The new codes are provided as a courtesy, to provide information and it is hoped that they will be useful. SSA has put added security protections in place since the Portal now allows communication directly with SSA's system, rather than going through the SSA contractor system. Some codes are restricted and nothing can be used that looks like a code execution. Certain code characters that have been used may need to be changed or removed.

Please note that the Portal will no longer support users of Windows XP effective January 2015. Microsoft will no longer support and provide updates to Windows XP. For security reasons, Portal users must be using a current browser.

Reminded that Ticket Portal Orientation Training will be held the next the two Wednesdays at 3 pm. The October All VR Call will be dedicated to analysis files and batch files - this will be a good opportunity to include your IT people.

Questions: Concerns were shared about the challenges of shared payments under Cost Reimbursement; error messages using the Portal; missing attachments; and extra work involved with denied claims. A suggestion was made for SSA to hold claims until SSA wage verifications "catch up".

Reminders

The full transcript, audio and technical bulletin from the call are available at <https://yourtickettowork.com/web/tw/events-archive>

Next All VR Call is October 6, at 3-4 pm EST and will be dedicated to analysis files and batch files.