**All State VR Agency Call**

**3 – 4 p.m. EST**

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Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the operator. Today's conference will begin momentarily. Until that time you will again be placed on music hold. Thank you.
Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. Welcome to the national VR conference call. During the presentation all participants will be in listen only mode. Afterwards we will conduct a question and answer session. At that time if you have a question, please press star followed by the number 1 on your telephone key pad. If you need to reach an operator at any time please press star zero. As a reminder this conference is being recorded Tuesday, September 15, 2015.
I will now turn the call over to Michelle Laisure with the Ticket to Work program. Please go ahead.

Michelle Laisure: Good afternoon, everyone, welcome to the national VR call, I am the EN Development and Training Manager here at the ticket to work program. We really appreciate everyone taking the time to call in. We have several general announcements we will go through, cost reimbursements updates, ticket portal issues and updates and then open our lines to questions and answers.
So to get started I will turn the call over to Regina Bowden, who will address general announcements.

Regina Bowden: Thanks, Michelle. Let me echo Michelle's welcome. Thank you all for joining us today. We're delighted you could join us on this teleconference call.
Last month we had several questions on the call about the format of this particular call and in particular we were asked if we would perhaps think about starting a separate call just for the cost reimbursement payment questions. Recently we sent out a communication and this communication, we let you all know that we're going to not have a separate cost reimbursement call because overwhelmingly the feedback we received was that you did not want a separate call. So what we're going to do is that each month we will have this national call as we've been having it and we will allocate time during the call for general cost reimbursement questions and these are questions that would affect everyone related to just general cost reimbursement questions. If there are specific questions about your transactions or your inquiries then of course we'd like for you to direct those questions to our help desk.
Also, in working from an agenda we love your feedback on the agenda so you can direct agenda suggestions to our help desk and the help desk, of course, is VR.helpdesk@SSA.gov with that I will turn the call over to Danielle and we will address the cost reimbursement updates.

Danielle Armstrong: Hello, everyone. Just a couple things that I have actually then I'm going to turn the call over to the help desk (inaudible) that you deal with. That was one of the things that was brought up as one of the topics for the format of the call, so they are here and available to answer your questions as well.
One update, the VR hand book we are in the process of updating so a lot of information in that will be updated, a lot of people had questions about that, it is in the process and hopefully it will be out soon. It's being reviewed currently.
Another thing that we wanted to bring up is one of the things we've been seeing a lot of is your sending in things, state wages or from different systems that you have and we aren't finding those things on SSA systems. That's not actually a new policy. I think it's become more prevalent now because we're processing cases pretty much as soon as you send them in.
Before what was happening was there was such a lag that you may have sent in information but by the time we got to process that case, it was verified on our SSA system. One of the things I think that we should all bear in mind, the funds that we use to pay you all comes from the social security trust fund. With that we have to make sure that we're verifying and we're doing our due diligence to make sure these are disbursements that we should make. Just as we owe it to the public, we owe it to ourselves. We all pay into that. We all want to make sure when we do make funds from it, it is for the proper use. Your program actually is to help get the beneficiary off the rolls, thus providing a savings to the trust fund. So let's keep that in mind when you are sending in things and you are we will let you know the current month of earnings that we have available. That way that will help you gauge what is available and what is already posted to our systems.
At this time I'm going to turn the call over to Raquel Donaldson, she's one of the help desk agents you are familiar with. We also have Shada Roper with us.

Raquel Donaldson: Good afternoon, everyone, this is Raquel. The first thing I want to discuss is the pending claims list. Last month, anyone who had pending claims, I sent you an email of that list. I want to thank all of those who already responded, I believe in a month's time we have that pending list reduced by more than 200 claims. Thank you to those who have responded already. I know it's a pain so we do apologize for the inconvenience, having to copy the claims over, mail them, fax them, email them, but what you have to understand is right now we are a paper-heavy process and we don't get the claims first, they go to another area when they are mailed in and then they come to us, so we don't know, sometimes they are lost, sometimes they get misplaced, sometimes it's just basic input error where we're putting in the wrong SSN, which is why when I send out the pending claim list the first thing I ask you to review is, is the SSN right or wrong. Unfortunately on our end we don't know if the SSN is wrong so that pending claim can sit there sometimes for a couple years, unfortunately. So it could be bad, it could be a duplicate where you've already been paid for it and the processor or the technician has entered it in twice. So that's one of the main reasons for the new portal and all the upcoming system enhancements, so if you haven't already looked at the list that I've emailed, I believe I emailed August 20th and August 24th. If you've lost it or need it emailed again, feel free to touch base with me via email and I'll be more than happy to send it out to you again.
Next topic is the difference between a resubmittal and a reconsideration.
A resubmittal is when you have a claim that was previously denied for not having SGA and something that i need for you guys to please make sure you are doing, when you are doing a resubmittal or a reconsideration, make sure you are marking that on the claim. We need to know whether you are resubmitting it or doing a reconsideration.
If you are doing a reconsideration, two things: mark it as a reconsideration and also in the remarks part of the claim, you should be placing something there giving the technicians and analysts a reason to do the reconsideration. We have entirely too many claims to try to figure out why we're reconsidering your claim. So if you are adding remarks that would help us know if it was just denied incorrectly, if the person did have benefits.
I have several VRs that when they send me reconsiderations they don't send the claim, they send me emails with a spreadsheet and the remarks are right there letting me know, hey, this is the reason why I want you to reconsider these claims. I have no problem accepting that as a reconsideration and sometimes i may need a copy of the claim, sometimes I don't. So that's the difference between a resubmittal and of course the reconsideration is basically the first line of an appeal.
The last thing that I have is the current month of the quarterly earnings available is July and the next report won't go out until October, won't be available until October. So that's where we are with the PPR, we're in July.

Michelle Laisure: Hello, Danielle, Raquel, we have a couple questions for you in the chat line. Do you want us to read them to you or do you have them available to reply to?

Raquel Donaldson: I do see them. Pat, the pending claim list should not have to go out every month. Right now we're doing it with the hope of cleaning up everything that was received before August 1st. So since we're currently working on claims as they come in the door we shouldn't have to send this report in -- I shouldn't have to send a report to you every month, the claim list.
If you are funding once you receive your case clearance report each month that there's still things missing, then by all means still go ahead and do what you've been doing as far as emailing the VR help desk and Shada and I will look into what claims you feel are missing or that haven't been received or hasn't been paid and we'll follow-up with you. But, no, it shouldn't be done on a monthly basis.
If you didn't receive a pending claim list it's probably because you didn't have any claims on our pending claim list, SSA it doesn't mean that you have some -- you may have some that we just don't know about, so if you are finding that you did not receive a pending claim list but you have pending claims on your data base then once again get in contact with me via the VR help desk, send me those claims and we'll go from there. We'll work together to get those claims paid or processed, rather.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Raquel I think that's the last one on the chat line right now. I'm sure we'll have more questions when we open up the call line. At this point we'll move on to the Ticket Portal update. Desiree.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Thank you, Michelle. Hello, everyone, I just wanted to give a little bit of information before Katie gives you additional updates.
I wanted to give you usage numbers for the state VR agency and let you know how we are progressing with portal usage. We have 66 state VR agencies approved to operate in the ticket portal, which is the majority of state VR agencies that participate in cost reimbursement. The four territories are not in the portal and, in addition to that, there are 6 others that are not in the portal. There are 4 agencies that still need to have suitability clearance so if you are on the line that's one thing that's preventing you from progressing, then there are two agencies that still need to get the my SSA account. But we're really pleased that, for the most part, everyone is either in the portal or diligent to try to pursue those processes to get in the portal and we appreciate all the effort and extra time and energy that has been taken by you to make this transition with us. Michelle, I wanted to go ahead and respond to the first question in the chat room.

Michelle Laisure: Go ahead, Desiree, thank you.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Question 1 on the technical bulletin on the discrepancy between state wage data and federal data and Danielle touched on that a bit. When we get data we have to verify it in two ways. We have to make sure the identity of the person is accurate, that the SSN, the name and that kind of information is accurate. If it doesn't make that cut, then it doesn't make its way to us for us to even see it. SSA has a way of verifying identity first of all. Sometimes the states may report information incorrectly and they may have someone else's wages with someone else's SSN and that kind of thing, so SSA has a process to verify from that perspective, then in addition to that our rules that were put in place that allow us to use the quarterly wage data and other data that's not like a primary evidence, original primary evidence such as pay stub information, the rules that are in place require that when we have wages that have been verified by SSA's field office, we use those first. And then we can use quarterly wage data or these other sources but there is a sequence that we have to use the information in. So while we use the state wage data, the quarterly data from OCSE, we can only use it in the absence of other data so that's why our decisions regarding the data that we use sometimes differ from what you use. So I hope that helps to clear it up a little bit.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Desiree.

Desiree Fitzgerald: I also want to address one other topic, I can't remember if it was part of the technical bulletin but I -- yes, it was part of the technical bulletin but it was also a question that comes up a lot and that's regarding the IVR.

 We know the IVR was a big convenience and it's not as convenient when you are a large state or when you have offices spread throughout. Some locations have centralized the process and I know that that's not always possible. So we are sensitive to that. We are hoping, though, that if you really -- if you really need people in the portal that you will get them in the portal. In the beginning we talked about limiting the number of users in the portal but we have no reason to do that. We have the authority at this point to just allow you to sign up according to your organization's business needs so that is an option.
Down the road we may seek resources for this, but we know that we're not going to have any resources to do it in 2016, you know, so 2017 we would have to compete to get resources to do it. So any way you look at it this is a dilemma that we have for the foreseeable future. But getting people in the portal, more people in the portal in your organization, you know, if your organization had 20 people in there, that would not be a problem for SSA you know, however many people you need to have in there to accommodate your needs for the most part would not be a problem. So that is an alternative, getting more people in the portal.
But also SSA has agreements with states where you can receive data from SSA some of the data that you don't get in the portal, far more data than anything the portal could possibly give you, could be achieved through agreements where you get information from SSA through telecommunications lines and maybe we will have a segment where we can get our research together and give you more information about that at a future date. But, you know, but to address some of the concerns about beneficiary data and which program the beneficiary is in and whether or not, you know, they are actually on our rolls, that kind of thing, if you had an agreement getting data from us that would satisfy all of that. So maybe we'll try to bring you some more information about that and look into which states actually have the agreements that we're talking about.
That's it, Michelle, I'll just turn it over to Katie for the rest of the portal update.

Katie Striebinger: Hi, everyone, this is Katie Striebinger. We do have time for questions if there's anything I miss that you wanted to go over. I do want to start with the fact that we have a release this month, Saturday, and we have a new user guide available on the secure training web site. One change we made and it was based on a lot of comments we've been getting about the analysis files.
If you'll notice the appendix, the table has been resorted and rearranged so that the codes are in order by the code you are used to receiving, you know, 0, 1, 2, 3, et cetera, not those new portal codes. So the intent of the return file is that you would get these exact same fields you are used to getting back if you had previously sent the file. You should get the same field back and then appended at the end are new fields with more detailed information. Those new codes and -- the new codes are out there to give you more information, but they are not required, you are not required to use them, you are not required to do programming to make sure you can account for it. Those new codes line up and are further information about existing codes that you used to get. If you used to get a 1, you are still going to get a 1 but we are also going to send you another code after with some more detailed information that is appended to the existing file. That is more information.
The reason we have this change is because the original files that you were sending, you would send to a contractor system, they would then take that file and send it to social security. Social security would then send the file back to the contractor system and then you would get your results.
You are now, when you are using the portal, you are uploading a file directly to SSA's system. You are directly updating our data base so we have to put things in place for security reasons and we also have the ability, we can give you more specific reasons for why something did or did not work because you are actually communicating with the system that is processing the transaction. Because of the fact you are touching our system directly we had to make some changes to the security. There are some codes that are restricted by use that you can't use in the file, like a pipe. You can't use anything that would look like some kind of code execution because we are trying to protect the system from hackers. We are trying to make it so in a file someone can't put something like a code that would trigger something in our system and in our data base.
Many of you have been working to another program and they have made tweaks to that but if you have been working with certain characters you are going to have to remove those characters in order to make that work. There is a new addition of zero that did not exist before. The chart is coded in order, 0, 1, 2, 3, so it does explain all the codes. Again i want to reiterate we do not expect you to use the new programming, to use the new codes. The way our resources are going we do not expect to make any changes on our side that would force you to use the new code, they are just there as a courtesy, to provide more information. If you find them useful, great, that's what they are out there for but if you do not see any value in them you do not have to use them. The same code 2 is the same code 2 in your file.
I saw a comment in the chat that you get errors. The way the system is working is that you are directly accessing our system, so the system is assuming that you want every single record to succeed. You want the assignments to open the case, you want closures to close the case, et cetera. So if the transaction does not take, it does not work or result in a successful opening or closure it's going to return an error. That does not mean you sent a bad record, it just means the transaction did not go through. So if you sent 4,000 rows and you got 3,000 errors, then only 1,000 of your cases are open or closed. The most common reason is the beneficiary SSN's are not ticket holders. It's a very common reason why something would not work. I hope that clarifies that. The error simply means the transaction did not work, you did not actually open or close a case. It does not mean there's an error with your file, you sent a bad record, and you will get the return codes back.
Then I do want to say, you know, I have some time today to talk about batch assignments but I want to say we are having ticket portal training the next two Wednesdays at 3:00. That will be a good time if you want to get some of your it staff, if they are available i will be on those two calls and you can ask questions there and anything that comes out from there we can obviously send up to our it staff here if you have specific questions.
In the meantime, you can also email the VR help desk and we will get your email to the right person and we are going to dedicate time on the October call to dedicate time to the batch analysis and maybe why some things are set the way they are, so that would also be a good time if you want to get some of your it people there on that call. Once again, i will try to help as best I can on the call today, but we don't want to dedicate too much time to batch assignments so we can have your dedicated time and dedicated sessions to go over the batch assignment.
And there is something, if you are in the portal you will have seen a message pop up in the announcements that starting in January 2016, the portal will not be able to support you if you have Windows XP still. That is a security requirement. Microsoft is no longer going to be supporting Windows XP -- Microsoft is no longer supporting Windows XP and because of that they are not going to be able to keep the security up to date so that is going to be a change. We won't be sending more information about this but that announcement is in the portal and i want to call your attention to it. You want to make sure if you are not using a current browser that you find a way to make it happen by January because there is nothing we can do on our side because we have to make sure everything is up to date and security compliant. Once again, you are directly updating SSA's system of the beneficiary's and their information very serious and thank you very much for being partners and we are here to help you and answer any questions and I think that's all I have, so I’ll turn it back to Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, Katie. Just to add I believe there's a version 4 ticket portal user guide that was released today, is that correct, Katie?

Katie Striebinger: The guide is available on the secure site and I believe a message went out today about it. We have it available.

Michelle Laisure: Please, those of you in the portal, please take the time and later today or tomorrow and go out and download or view the most recent revised ticket portal user guide.
As far as the call in numbers for the new orientation sessions, those of you again that are in the portal would have received an announcement today through social security administration, it's called a reminder. The next ticket portal orientation session for September the 16th or you could have received one even earlier, one was released on Friday, August the 28th. And that gave you the call-in numbers but no worry, again, the ticket portal orientation session reminder went out today and there will be another reminder for any of those -- any of you not in the portal, you will get an invitation plus everyone else next week as a reminder for the Wednesday new portal orientation session.
With that, we do want to, James is going to give you the location of the technical bulletin on our web site because we recognize that half of you that call in are not on the chat line and we have included the web site, where to go to get the technical bulletin that we are referring to today. James?

James Wackerbarth: It's on your ticket to work dot com in the information center under the calendar of events.

Michelle Laisure: And that calendar of events shows our call and other events with the ticket training program. Please go to our web site, go to calendar of events, look at the 2015 schedule and you will see the September calls and the documents we are using today for our call today.
With that, operator, we are ready to go to our callers.

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

Eugenia Cox: Hi, it's Eugenia. I wanted to say when people ask me about the differences between the recon and the resubmittal and Raquel, correct me if I'm wrong. The reconsideration is something you are going to consider is the claim as it was submitted originally, and the resubmittal was when you are resubmitting with additional information. Is that correct?

Raquel Donaldson: Resubmittal is when it was denied by the SSA.

Eugenia Cox: And you are sending additional information in. That was the original information given to me by the staff at SSA before, the recon you want us to look at it again because you think the denial was incorrect.

Raquel Donaldson: With the recon, you need to provide remarks on the claim as to why we should reconsider it as well.

Shada Roper: Also Eugenia, this is Shada, per the VR handbook and you are going to receive some information on that, in section 5.7 in the VR handbook we are only supposed to reconsider claims having nothing to do with SGA, so therefore if your claim was denied due to the person not having social security benefits that is a reconsideration.

Eugenia Cox: Oh, a lot of the recons are because of the fact that the SGA was done incorrect and we've had those overturned.

Raquel Donaldson: Yes, and we have been reconsidering them, but we aren't really supposed to do that. So we, we're going to be looking at that closely whenever you send those in and then we have, do reconsiderations where they really should be resubmittals.

Eugenia Cox: Yeah, because of those inconsistencies, here's my concern, if we call it the wrong thing will it come back to us?

Raquel Donaldson: Absolutely.

Eugenia Cox: So if it should have been called a reconsideration and it's called a resubmittal you will just turn around and send it right back to us. And vice versa. Because, like I said, we sent reconsiderations on claims that had, that were about SGA and we'd ask the question and then they told us just to fax the claim back in and then they just processed it as a reconsideration. So it's really all about what name we call it?

Candice: Eugenia, hi, this is Candice I want to reiterate the difference between recons and resubmittals. Resubmittals is for SSA reasons. Eight months or less of SGA a recon is where you say i think this person had benefits and we denied them for not having benefits or the benefits were denied for other reasons, that's considered a recon. So when you submit the claim to 199, please put on their recon and the reason why you are sending in the recon. There has to be a reason because it's an appeal to our original decision.

Eugenia Cox: Yes. But what I'm saying is that when I send in a claim issue in on the help line or whatever on the email, the VR help desk, and I say they have had $6,000 each quarter and you denied it for below SGA, can you please look at it again, so you have me send it back in as a reconsideration.

Candice: No, you submit as a resubmittal because that has to be --.

Eugenia Cox: Even though there's no additional information being sent?

Candice: You need to send additional information. If we denied it you need to send additional information for resubmittal.

Raquel Donaldson: This is Raquel. When you send a message to the VR help desk and you say I need you to look at this again because it was denied for not having 9 months of SGA and you say hey it has $6,000 that is your reason. Those are the remarks you are making for that to be considered.

Eugenia Cox: I know, but that has to do with SGA and they're saying it isn't reconsideration.

Raquel Donaldson: It's a resubmittal, I'm sorry. But you are providing information to us for us to look at it more than once.

Eugenia Cox: But I won't be giving you any additional information.

Candice: When you are addressing the VR help desk, make sure you let Shada or Raquel know why you want them to look at the claim. I'm saying when you submit the claim it has to be a reconsideration if it's for non-SGA reasons. We cannot do an appeal on SGA, we can do resubmittals. It's in the VR provider handbook.

Eugenia Cox: Okay, it's really not any clearer than when I asked the first time. Because what Raquel just said if I am saying you looked at the SGA incorrectly, all I have is just what I submitted and its $6,000 for 3 months -- three quarters in a 12 month period, but I think that you evaluated that wrong. I sent it in as, hey, can you look at those wages again and they will have me fax it. And if they were wrong and they send it in as your appeal was accepted and they will pay it. What they are saying is that is a reconsideration. I'm not submitting any additional wages or any additional information other than the fact I want you to look at it again. You see where we're getting confused here? We're not giving you any additional information and you are saying --.

Desiree Fitzgerald: This is Desiree. Sometimes not providing additional information may result in the same decision and other times providing, you know, no additional information, you may get a new decision because someone can look at something and realize that we missed something.
So semantics aside, the bottom line is whatever you submit, if you call it the wrong thing, someone is still going to look at it. It's just that if you are resubmitting based on, if you disagree with the SGA decision then you should provide additional information.
This is going to be easier when we have VR cost reimbursement in the portal because the concept of resubmittals will go away. You know, the portal will tell you whether we have the earnings on record and you will only be able to submit your claim when we don't have it on record if you are sending some evidence. So any resubmittals in theory.

Eugenia Cox: I just go through the help desk and then she has me fax, I'm going to stick with that as opposed to sending something in where somebody doesn't have clue, know what I mean, I'd rather stick with -- like I said, the way it was explained to me before really didn't have to do with the type of claim it was or how it was denied. This is the first I've heard that. It was whether I was resubmitting with additional information that was given in the VR training back in the day for us old people. I'm just going to stick with submitting them through the help desk and whatever it's called, it's called, and I’m not going to -- I just don't want somebody or a VR agency to send in something and didn't call it the right thing and then have them just turn around and ignore it and send it back because I've had that happen before.

Desiree Fitzgerald: That shouldn't be happening. If that happens you can let Danielle know but nobody should be denying anything without looking at it.

Eugenia Cox: I submitted claims back in July and you were saying you are processing them as they come in and none of those have been touched. The last two months for us very minimal claims have been processed, like six, and some of them were on that pending list. So I didn't know, you know, you said you are up to date but I've had, like I said, very minimal claims process in the last two months.

Desiree Fitzgerald: If that's the case we will contact you personally because that's why we're going through the pending claims list. She'll talk to you personally.

Eugenia Cox: For Katie, you know the PII we talked about, I've been pulling those, almost all those I've been pulling, I can send you 8 of those with names and I'll send you those right now. That has me concerned because like Gina had said at the training that's how we determine we have the right person is by the name popping up. That has me concerned if that's not supposed to be happening at all.

Katie Striebinger: Just to clarify for everyone, when you check the assignability of a ticket, it should not give you the name back because you type in an SSN, it should not provide you with a name on the next screen and Eugenia pointed out she is seeing the name so she's going to send me some examples. You should not expect to see the beneficiary's name when you check the assignability, no.

Eugenia Cox: And there was other concerns on our questions that were answered online, I didn't know if you wanted to go over those or if you wanted to do those at a different time. You know the questions that some of us sent in and you answered them?

Desiree Fitzgerald: You mean the technical bulletin?

Eugenia Cox: Yeah.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Michelle, do we plan to go over the technical bulletin.

Michelle Laisure: We were going to take the questions and add those if we don't have time today but include those in our call in October.

Desiree Fitzgerald: So you want us to respond to the bulletin with more statements or questions? We can do that.

Anonymous: Take questions from the audience, Michelle.

Michelle Laisure: Yes, we're taking calls, questions now.

Eugenia Cox: Okay. My first question is that, about the split payments and how we don't have the ability to get split payments and it says that we are allowed split payments under an agreement. The problem is that there are no en's that really want to enter into agreement where they want to give us money. So how do you deal with that?

Desiree Fitzgerald: Well, we don't have any control over whether or not the community of providers in your area are willing to work with your organization, but we do have a mechanism for that to happen if you are able to arrange an agreement. I don't know if national ENs would be another option.

Eugenia Cox: Those are the ones we can't get any agreements from, is the national en. Those are the ones that are taking the tickets before they send them to us. So getting a split payment from these large national employment networks that just take tickets in volume is next to near impossible for us so there is no mechanism like you have within the ticket program where these people are saying we don't served them and they have split payment forms and all those things.
All we have is that under cost reimbursement is that what has been happening in the past is that we send in a claim to you for cost reimbursement, you look and see that the ticket was assigned to another provider while we were serving them and you have, it's been kind of a mixed bag. Sometimes you just deny them and say it wasn't assigned to you at the time, sometimes you look to see if there were any payments made to this other provider and if there haven't been any payments then you pay us. So --.

Desiree Fitzgerald: When you are assigning a person under the ticket system, everything available is available to you. You can split a ticket with that organization. There's nothing stopping you from getting a payment based on your contribution of services.

Eugenia Cox: I'm not talking about when we're acting as an EN, I'm talking about when we are doing a cost reimbursement claim.

Desiree Fitzgerald: When you are doing a cost reimbursement claim that's when an agreement would be in order. If you knew you were going to be working with an organization, you know, that's not a state VR agency then that would be the option available to you.

Eugenia Cox: That's where we can't get any.

Danielle Armstrong: There's no split for cost reimbursement except in situations where two state VR agencies are serving a person and providing different services.

Eugenia Cox: Yeah, the problem is that on a national level is that we have national en's that are taking tickets and sorta kinda sending them to VR for services. We can't get the ticket back because they've convinced the beneficiary that that ticket is worth money to them and we have to serve them. So we serve them and we go to try to get our cost reimbursement and we can't. Bottom line.
But we can, you have paid us when you have looked to see if that ticket has ever gotten any ticket payments on them. And so if there were no ticket payments you have made the decision to pay us our cost reimbursement because no ticket payments have been made on that ticket.

Danielle Armstrong: No, I am familiar with the scenario you are talking about, but that was not -- enough detail in no. 3 to know that's what you were talking about. That's an age-old problem and it is something that we don't have the right people here to resolve and I really don't know what it's going to take because we attempted to appeal to the goodwill of the particular ENs and there was one en at one time.

Eugenia Cox: It happens a lot and, you know, and we fight. We fight for that money because we're the ones that put in all that money and all that effort into serving that person.

Regina Bowden: Okay, Eugenia, we're going to have to allow other people to pose questions today, but I will bring this up, I'll let mark know this is still an issue for you, mark green, and I don't know what can be done at this point but I’ll let him know that it still persists.

Eugenia Cox: And the IVR question, your answer said in addition the manual process for checking ticket assignability to contact OSM, how do you do that? The only mechanism we have is to send an email.

Desiree Fitzgerald: We do have a chart that has contact information. I can't remember if this is a mailbox or a phone number but it probably is a mailbox. Michelle, can you make that information available as part of the recap?

Michelle Laisure: Yes, we will.

Eugenia Cox: There's no phone number so --.
>> it's an email address.
>> if the rc is in a room and needing that information right away, they could wait 2 or 3 days before they see it.
>> it's a manual process, yes.
>> you should get those individuals in the portal, even if it's that one usage that they need. If it's that important, that's the alternative for the moment.
>> okay, thank you.
>> thank you. Operator, do we have another question from a caller?

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, as a reminder, to register for an audio question, press star then the number 1. Our next question comes from the line of Kathy Smerting. Please proceed with your question.

Kathy Smerting: Hi, good afternoon, this is Kathy Smerting, California, to go back quickly on the reconsideration submittals I'm a little confused also. The appeals process for reconsideration I always considered that meant maybe you overlooked something and you made a mistake and we're asking you to take a look at it. It doesn't mention anything specific to be whether they are on SSI or SSDI benefits or not. It could be SGA, can't it, if we have proof that we believe that this person has 9 months continuous SGA level high amount that we can ask you to look at it again? Is that correct?

Social Security: We'll send out a written clarification on this and that way you will all have the same common understanding. Because I can't even restate what it is that you just said so we may have muddied the water but we'll send out a written clarification just so we'll all have a common understanding what that is. But I would reiterate, if there's anything you think we need to look at again, just ask us, regardless of what you call it.

Kathy Smerting: Okay, thank you.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you. Operator, do we have another call?

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of David Leon. Please proceed with your question.

David Leon: Hi, two questions. First is if we can discuss erroneous unassignments from the portal and how those will be handled. In Virginia we had a case that had been in use and was slated to be a partnership plus handoff, only to find out suddenly that it had somehow been assigned to us and in the time it was unassigned, because I didn't know that was even possible to happen, it suddenly was with another employment network. I then had to get the client to unassign, but there's about a 3 month window where this ticket wasn't with us and I'm concerned that of the 6,000 other cases I have that have tickets I'd like to determine a way to deal with these, but also what the policy will be going forward when we find one of these cases and bring it to SSA's attention.
And my second question goes back to just the concept that was in part 1 of the technical bulletin, if I have quarterly wage data that shows someone earned over $5,000 and SSA comes back and says they did not earn SGA for any single month, I'd like to think there's a way to go back and look at how that's mathematically possible.

Danielle Armstrong: Okay, about the erroneous unassignments, i just want to clarify is this a portal issue or is this just unassignment policy issue? Katie, is there anything going on with the portal with unassignments or is this not a portal issue?

Katie Striebinger: I don't believe it's a portal issue. If the case was unassigned then either someone unassigned it logging in for your VR, some organization logs -- someone has to physically do it.

David Leon: The beneficiary could have done it. The client could have unassigned the ticket.

Katie Striebinger: Bo, the client cannot unassign a case from VR without VR doing this.

>> i didn't realize it was a cost reimbursement case. When we were using the term unassignment.
>> these are cost reimbursement cases and this came up at nina, saber said it has happened to en's and VR's and it's just been a part of the process. I never knew this existed until a week ago, but this was a cost reimbursement case.
>> in the portal there are only two ways to unassign a case using the portal if it happened in the portal. Someone from the VR logged in and accidentally unassigned it, you click on the actions menu and maybe they just clicked close the case, a person could have done it. I do want to start with if you send the specific SSN to the en help desk they can research it and we can figure out exactly what happened , but a person had to have done it. Either that or we're in a file and the file closed the case, that is a person typing it in and putting the SSN in there if their cost came from the beneficiary and another line and someone could have put it in our system. Without the specific SSN i don't know what happened but the system does not unassign things on its own unless the case was actually no longer a ticket. If the ticket was terminated the ticket would be unassigned. That could was the unassignment but i'm not sure what would have happened that would let someone unassign the case if it was terminated. But that specific SSN i don't know what's happening because there's nothing with the new portal that would cause this. There is nothing in place that would let that happen.

Desiree Fitzgerald: David, could you please send Katie the SSN involved and maybe we can get to the bottom of what happened in that particular case.

David Leon: Sure, I had actually already sent it to the VR help desk because the old portal allowed me to assist clients with unassigning from ENs when starting services but the new portal does not allow that.

Desiree Fitzgerald: We can look for it there, either way. You had another part to your question?

David Leon: Well, I really had two others. One of the issues that i think is being lost in a lot of conversation is it seems like some of the changes in processing is not only creating a tremendous amount of additional work for VR, but for SSA as well. And in terms of that thought I think two different states suggested maybe holding claims because as it stands in the last 6 months I have resubmitted or reconsidered, however you want to call it, 40 claims and I'm going to have to keep sending them in if you don't have the data that I have. And this isn't just for the claims I have wage data but I look at this potential payment report, mine had a thousand plus that are potentially claims. You are forcing me to send in every one because I can't afford not to be paid on a case I should. And I don't think that's really the intention for you to have me send in a thousand claims. I hope it's not. Because when somebody asks me to forecast based on those claims what I think we're going to get, I can't tell our fiscal folks anything and I'm a small state compared to California or Texas.

Desiree Fitzgerald: Okay, David, I'm sorry, we were having a side-bar here. We're going to talk about this and get back to you on it, looking at if there's anything that we can do.

David Leon: Again, I'm not trying to be difficult, I just -- I think there's got to be a happy medium between being caught up and going too fast so that your system isn't in the same place and we're going to process everything the day it comes in because we are resending a tremendous amount.

Social Security: Okay, we'll look and see if there's something we can do. Automation is going to solve this problem, you know, as well, but for now we're still, you know, almost a year away from that. So we'll think about it and see if we can come up with something.
Are we ready for the next question?

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Tom Surrich.

Tom Surrich: I'd like to agree with what David just said. We're seeing a tremendous increase also in the number of resubmittals because you are denying claims when you are only seeing two quarters of wages and we've sent in documented three quarters of SGA way above SGA wages.
As David said, it's just creating duplicate work for you and for us when we send it back in as a resubmittal and my simple suggestion, and it doesn't, I don't think, require any major changes, when you see that situation where you see two quarters of wages and we show three quarters of wages, just hold it for a month or maybe two months and probably that additional quarter of wages would show up and save us all a lot of wasted effort here. It always used to be that way when you had a little bit more time due to a larger pending list.
But right now it's just very frustrating and wasting time and it doesn't make sense doing it this way.

Social Security: Okay. All right, and we hear you so we are probably going to be addressing it.

Tom Surrich: As far as I'm concerned it's not something that requires automation or major system change, it's just a matter of holding something for, you know, maybe a couple of months or a quarter at most but it certainly would save us all a lot of anxiety and wasted effort.

Social Security: And that sounds like the type of interim solution that we're going to be discussing. Automation would eliminate the problem entirely, but for now it sounds like we need to do something practical, maybe.

Tom Surrich: One other question I have is when we get a claim back and it says see attachments, there is never an attachment. Is there a reason for that?

Social Security: Okay, we're going to have to get help desk assistance with answering this question.

Operator: Our next question comes from the line of Amy Zaffery.

Amy Zaffery: Hi, it's Amy from Texas. I think I have the simplest question regarding resubmittal and reconsideration. I have worked here 4 years and never had a problem. A reconsideration is simply asking SSA to look at the claim that was just denied, no matter the reason. It can be, hey, look, they really do have benefits, you just didn't see it, or, hey, look, they have those quarters of SGA, you just didn't see it. They will come back and say, you're wrong, they really only had 8 months.
A resubmittal is when you are resubmitting that claim say a year from then. In other words, you have a new period of SGA and that comes straight from your own book. It says, quote, a resubmittal is different from a reconsideration because a resubmittal is not an appeal of SSA's original decision but simply a refiling based on a later period of SGA so if I accept that, oh, okay, they only had 8 months of SGA, now a year goes by, I am going to resubmit that exact same claim but I'm going to attach a different three quarters of wages that I found. That is a resubmittal.
Anyway, I just wanted to clarify that. I think that is the simplest explanation, I have followed that and I have never had an issue.

Michelle Laisure: Okay, thank you, we'll still submit something in writing so everyone can be sure that they have that, that they clearly understand it. Thank you. There are no further questions at this time. Are there any questions in the chat? Just double checking. All right, well, thank you. I believe this was very informative, a good discussion around several different topics so thank you all for calling in and participating in the questions that we received, both by phone and through the chat line.
I wanted to share with you the next VR call is not on the second Tuesday due to the holiday, so we just want to make sure that it's on the calendar for you to call in on Tuesday, October the 6th and again that's Tuesday, October the 6th you will be receiving a notice on that. As Katie mentioned, our call in October will be focusing on the ticket portal, more so about the batch uploading, we received several questions from you on that, enough for us to definitely dive deeper into that process as well as interpreting the analysis report.
Again, thank you, Katie, for the information we did receive today and as she stated, if you have questions now please do not hesitate to send those directly to the VR help desk email box and they will respond to them.
Again, Danielle and Raquel, thank you for your insight and information on the cost reimbursement. It sounds like there will be a follow-up on the technical questions we discussed today. Any closing remarks from social security administration?

Danielle Armstrong: Just thank everyone for joining the call. A very good conversation.

Michelle Laisure: Thank you, I totally agree. Thank you, everyone, have a good evening and we hope that you will join us in October, October 6. Thank you, good night. Good evening.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, that does conclude the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and ask that you please disconnect your line.

[End of Call]