



All VR Call Recap

February 1, 2022

Welcome

Robert Pfaff welcomed everyone. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is in possession of a draft summary report for the employment summit that SSA held last November 2021 and is currently reviewing the document. It will go through several channels of review before SSA releases it to the public. SSA will release the summary report between now and the next quarterly call. In reference to our collaboration with Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and John Connelly, SSA is doing outreach to Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (VRs) that are in order of selection and facilitating discussions between SSA and State VRs (Vocational Rehabilitation) to help them develop strategies and plans to familiarize VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) agencies with Employment Networks (ENs). There is a questions and answers forum at the end of the call.

Announcements

IEP Completion Requirement

The beneficiary and the counselor must sign the Individual Employment Plans (IEP). The VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) must date the IEP. If the signature and date is not included in the IEP, SSA will deny the claim.

Guest Speaker

Mike Corso: Act-V Academy

Act V Academy is providing training and certification for individuals to enter the workforce. Act V Academy is currently working to get the program off ground and start enrolling participants. The pilot program ends August 31, 2022. Mike would like as many people in the program as possible. Programs offered include Digital Literacy, Microsoft Specialists, MS Teams, A Plus and Security Plus. The program is a 3-year project in which students are placed in entry level positions the first year and the second year they will add Cyber Security and Programming



to the curriculum. Act V is working with several organizations to get the program started. It will be teacher-assisted on the Go 1 platform (video-based) self-paced learning. The teaching assistant will answer questions through Teams and will also answer through email, as well as video. Send any questions to mike@disabledperson.com. This is a pilot program and there is no charge to the consumer through 8/31/22. Participants can complete 2 courses from now through the end of August.

Cognosante Introduction

Jocelyn Greenidge, TPM (Ticket Program Manager) Project Director introduced herself. Jocelyn also introduced the team as the new TPM contractor working alongside SSA to support the contract. We worked hard to provide minimal disruption in services during the transition to a new contractor. Jennelle Bratcher, TPM Ticket Operations Manager was introduced by Jocelyn. She will oversee operations for EN (Employment Networks) Payments and VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) Cost Reimbursements. Jennelle provided the background of her 17-year SSA federal career, as well as her private sector experience. Jennelle introduced Deputy Ticket Operations Manager, Debra Tennessee. Debra has worked for SSA for over 30 years. She has also worked with the previous contractor from 2008 through the present. Her prior role was Ticket Operations Manager for EN (Employment Networks) Payments.

Backlog status, FYTD VR Reimbursement Activity by State report

Katie Striebinger provided the backlog update. We are currently working on cases that were uploaded 10/2021, the beginning of the fiscal year. We do have diaries much older than 10/2021. In reviewing the fiscal year activity report, some of the numbers may be lower than your pending file. That is because the report is set up based on the fiscal year to date, which is why it begins on October 1. The report went into your inbox this morning. There is a second tab in the report called "definitions" to explain all the column headers and the logic used to put it together. It is a snapshot of Fiscal Year to Date (FYTD), 10/1/21 to present. If you want to check on the status of your claim, in real time, you will continue to use the portal.

FY22 cost formula update, Reconsiderations, Claims placed in diary, State VR directory

Raquel Donaldson informed everyone that RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration) has switched forms for fiscal year 22 and is now using RSA-17. The data is more complicated. SSA is working on converting the information to

the cost formula worksheet. Once completed and approved, you will receive it. Untimely filing will not be denied. You will not receive a “620” denial. VR’s will have up to 6 months to submit their FY22 cost formula for review and approval. As inception arrives, you will receive an email from Raquel. When submitting reconsiderations, keep in mind that as technicians and analysts process reconsiderations, we always use the initial claim filing date. The process still works FIFO (first in, first out). Although you may be submitting a reconsideration from an initial claim done in 2019, it does not mean it gets worked before any claim uploaded prior to that. If you submit the reconsideration today, it will not get processed until we begin working on claims that were uploaded in January 2022. There is no priority. Whatever the submittal date is, we look at the same date for the initial claim, the supplemental claim, and the reconsideration. We are aware that there have been issues with the 650-denial code. If you receive a 650 denial, and did not receive an email from Raquel FIRST, continue to email the VR Help Desk. Fiscal Year to Date VR Reimbursement Report highlights the 120+ column for every VR. More than likely, those are claims that have been placed in diary for 1 to 2 years and are still sitting. When reviewing pending claims, if you have questions about why the claim remains in diary, other than a system error or something internal with SSA, please reach out to the help desk. If an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is submitted without a signature, the VR will receive an email from Raquel Donaldson requesting a signed IPE. If the VR is unable to produce a signed copy of the IPE, then SSA will deny the claim under denial code 650. The beneficiary and VR counselor must sign and date the IPE. An updated State VR directory will go out soon to regional coordinators who will send out to VRs. Please review the directory and submit any changes or corrections to your regional coordinator. If you don’t know who the coordinator is for your region, please email the VR Helpdesk.

Questions and Answers

David: Welcome Debra and Jennelle. Congrats on your positions. Clarify: **IPE signature. Is electronic signature still allowed, due to COVID and because we are not doing face to face interviews?** Raquel advised, YES, an electronic signature is allowed.

Eric Schmidt, MD Rehab Services: In reference to a notification received November 2021 from RSA replacing DUNNS # with Unique entity identifier UEI (Unique Entity Identifier). **Will the change adversely affect the cost reimbursement process?** Katie: It should be a seamless process from a systems standpoint. The release will occur on April 2, 2022, and the system will switch over. The Systems Department has been provided with everyone’s UEI (Unique Entity Identifier). We will be using the DUNs a reference number. We will be adding the UEI behind the scenes to ensure payments go through correctly. The change should not cause any problems.

Eugenia Cox, Oregon: Welcome Jennelle and Debbra back. **Do you want us to keep submitting claims for FY 2022 and will they stay on hold, or would you like us to hold off?** NO...continue to submit even if for FY 22. **When we have inquiries on claims or questions with the portal, do we send requests to VR help desk?** Yes. Unless told differently, always contact the VR Help Desk.

Brian Cunners, California Dept of Rehabilitation: **Any plans /solutions for improving the acquisitions for BPQY (Benefits Planning Query) either at the local or national level?** Patrice: There are some delays processing BPQY's. We have implemented a new system, but it has not speeded up the process. We advise that you continue to work with the local field office. If there is an issue or dramatic delay, send a message to the VR help desk. Only in extreme cases would we ask to email the VR help desk.

Any discussions about adding BPQY (Benefits Planning Query) to MySSA account? This is currently being discussed at an elevated level. The system is currently set up to provide information to beneficiaries, but not to 3rd parties. It would take a huge change to let a VR, EN, etc. retrieve a BPQY (Benefits Planning Query) from a MySSA account and the system is not currently set up this way. It is on the list of things we are looking into, but it will take some time.

Any plans to bring automated ticket status checking? We must defer that question to SSA (Jennelle) Rob...through the call center we can check ticket assignability status. Helpline is in place for status checking. The call center is up and running. **Deborah asked the purpose of checking ticket status.** Brian replied: Before IPE approval, the counselor must check ticket status to see if it is assignable. Debbra advised we need to check on that.

Eugenia Cox: **As a VREN (Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Network), is there a special place we go for inquiries instead of VR help desk?**

Debbra: EN payments related inquiries should go to the provider help desk and calls from VRENS. If the inquiry is 100 percent VR related, use the same process of contacting the VR helpdesk (Jennelle)

Rob: Next item...Wrap Up!

Raquel concluded by thanking everyone. **The 2nd Quarter All VR call will be April 12, 2022, at 1pm.** If there are any changes, a notification will be sent by government delivery email.