THE CONNECTIONS WEEKLY
February 22 - 29, 2008

Correspondence from the Desk of the Division of Child Welfare and Community Services, Deputy Commissioner Jane Lynch…

On Friday, February 15th a letter was forwarded from OCFS Division of Child Welfare and Community Services Deputy Commissioner, Jane Lynch, regarding the need for local districts to report medical diagnosis or well child status on the *Clinical Appointment* window of the Health Tab for designated children in order to fulfil AFCARS (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System) elements in the CONNECTIONS application. For your reference, a copy of the letter is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Home page.

To assist local districts with this process, a report has been created that identifies which of the designated children do not have this information recorded. These reports are in a shared drive that can be accessed using the URL below. Since confidential information is contained in the report they are password protected. Passwords have been sent to the local district Commissioners and Directors of Services. If you have not received the password for the report for your district, please contact your Regional Office CONNECTIONS staff. This URL also will link you to a folder with resource materials.
URL - \\fnphsen0a1ah\groups\connections\build 18\afcars_reports\
(Please note that you may also type this URL directly into the address browser.)

Build 18.9.6 Release Notes…

The Build Release Notes, identifying the specific content of the Build, will be available on Monday, February 26th. For a glimpse of what will be in the Build please read the piece below!

Build 18.9.6 Is On the Horizon…

(Please note that this piece was included in the Weekly dated 2/15/08.)
And we are prepping for it in Communications by compiling all of the modifications that will be included in the Build into one document. We are doing things a bit differently regarding the prep document, or as you know it, the Build Release Notes, and we will be sending them your way by the end of next week!

As you are aware through your RIST and RUG group meetings, this Build will be implemented on Friday, March 7, 2008, and will include modifications to the CONNECTIONS application. The focus of this Build is on most of the remaining, short term FIT recommendations, additional user requests and system support for mission critical tasks and legislation.

The following piece highlights a few specific application modifications, fixes and enhancements.

<u>Responses to Functional Improvement Team Requests</u> (short term items not provided in previous Builds)

- A comment box will be added to the Life Skills Assessment where the user can document information with regard to these assessments.
- Adding a grammar check to narrative areas and adding an improved spell check to both narrative areas and comment boxes, to provide more 'WORD-like' functionality in these areas.
- The Service Plan area of the FASP and FASP output will now include Outcome and Activity blocks that were discontinued in the last FASP so that workers have a more complete picture of the Service Plan and its related history.

<u>User Requests</u>

- Voluntary Agency workers will now be informed that there are reports prior to 1/1/2006 (date of ADM) – these reports will be listed on the CPRS and FSS Case Summary tabs providing a more complete view of the CPS history.
- A new Progress Note type of "Other Casework Activity" has been created that will allow the field to select purposes of "Cross Reference" "Case Closing" and "Transfer". The "Cross Reference" purpose will allow the caseworker to summarize the cross reference history. Voluntary Agency workers within the CPRS Progress Notes module will not be able to search or view the Progress Note type of "Other Casework Activity" with a purpose of "Cross Reference." This purpose can be entered prior to a purpose of 24 Hour Contact.
- Two additional Progress Note types "Notice" and "Approval" will be created for those districts using higher level edits.
- More appropriate Day Care/Foster Care Investigation closure reasons will be added in accordance with programmatic need.
- FAD workers will now be informed when a CPS report involving a foster parent is determined, with the determination.
- The Permanency Hearing Petitioner information will now be enterable and included on the outputs.
- The To-Do list displayed to the user will now include all To-Do's coming due within the next 30 days. This view assists the worker in managing the approval of the FASPs coming due.

New Legislation\Program Initiatives\Support of Federal Requirements

- Support for the 2007 legislation regarding FBI Fingerprinting and out-of-state child abuse and maltreatment checks will be implemented in the Foster/Adoptive Home Record summary.
- Bridges to Health (B2H) - B2H will provide community based services to children who are in the care and custody of a Local Social Services District (LDSS) or OCFS, who have significant mental health, developmental disabilities or health care needs, and who require an institutional level of care.
- AFCARS - capturing the necessary, remaining elements for AFCARS compliance in order to improve New York State's submission. The design builds on some existing windows in order to complement the existing workflow and minimize worker impact and creates one new adoption related window.

Bug Fixes
Numerous (50-60) bug fixes in areas such as performance, system errors and access to data are also included in the Build.

Preview Will Be Available for Build 18.9.6…
(Please note that this piece was included in the Weekly dated 2/15/08.)
For the field, Preview for the Build will be available on <u>Monday, March 4th</u>. We encourage you to take a look at the new functionality that will be implemented when the Build is rolled out on March 7th!

CONNECTIONS Production Metrics or CONNECTIONS Fun Facts!!!
About a month ago we included a piece in the Weekly about how many of you are accessing the application and just which pieces of the application were being used the most, well… here is an update for the month of January 2008 – sort of a comparative analysis, if you will between the month of December 2007 and January 2008.

In January 2008 application access numbers rose, in comparison to December 2007 - in December the average number of individuals accessing the application across the state was 13,655; in January 2008 the average number rose to 14,235. Peak concurrent users statewide was also up in January (5,213), as compared to December (5,038). More FSIs were created statewide -   December: 4,477 vs. January: 4,995 and many more progress notes were created: December – 667,852 vs. January – 792,916!   As the year progresses we will update you on the system metrics.

Training Info You Should Know…
UPDATED – The Build 18.9 Job Aid – Health Services (Functionality for Caseworkers, Case Planners, Case Managers and CPS Workers/Monitors)
For your reference, an updated version of the Build 18.9 Job Aid – Health Services, has just been released and is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website on the Training page. This job aid provides a detailed overview of the CONNECTIONS system changes that were introduced with the implementation of Build 18.9 and Build 18.9.1; specifically information about health services. In addition to the revised job aid the accompanying document: Revisions to the Build 18.9 Health Services Job Aid, is also posted to the

site on the same page. Revisions have been made to the job aid in the area of the security of health services information.

A NEW CBT - Completing Supervisory Tasks with CONNECTIONS
(Please note that this piece was included in the Weekly dated 2/15/08.)
In our continued effort to be responsive to the requests from the field related to training needs, the CONNECTIONS Training Project of the Professional Development Program (PDP) has drafted a new CBT titled: Completing Supervisory Tasks with CONNECTIONS. This course provides supervisors from both districts and voluntary agencies with an overview of specific CONNECTIONS functionality that can be used to complete supervisory tasks. Topics in this course include an overview of supervisory responsibilities; monitoring casework activities using CONNECTION; using and generating reports; merging and splitting cases; reviewing work in CONNECTIONS and approving work in CONNECTIONS.

Copies of the CBT will be shipped to Staff Development Coordinators from each district and agency, as well as to Implementation staff from the OCFS Regional Offices. The memo announcing this CBT was forwarded to agency Staff Development Coordinators earlier today and is also posted to the CONNECTIONS website on the Training page.

A NEW Administrative Directive (ADM) - 08-OCFS-ADM-01…
Changes Associated with CONNECTIONS Build 18.9 Health, Education and Permanency Hearing Report Modules
(Please note that this piece was included in the Weekly dated 2/15/08.)
As you are aware, in March 2007, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) implemented Build 18.9 in CONNECTIONS. Included in the Build were discrete modules that supported the documentation of currently required health and education information for children served through the child welfare system; the incorporation of the Permanency Hearing Report (PHR), the Notice of Permanency Hearing and the Statement to the Court of the Permanency Hearing Report and Notice Sent; as well as additional functional improvements that provide ease of use for workers and aid in system responsiveness.

At the time of the implementation of Build 18.9 in OCFS provided local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) with the option to implement an incremental approach to full compliance with the documentation requirements of health and education in CONNECTIONS. Please note that this ADM serves as official notification of what health and education data must now be included in CONNECTIONS for all children in foster care, including children placed in certified or approved foster homes, and all children in the custody of LDSS or OCFS placed in congregate care settings in Voluntary Authorized Foster Care Agencies (VA). In addition, this ADM identifies significant changes and enhancements in CONNECTIONS Build 18.9 designed to capture essential data elements required to support New York State compliance with the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS).
The link to access the Administrative Directive (ADM), issued on February 13th, is: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/policies/external/.

General Information Systems (GIS) Messages...
GIS 08 - #002 - Dated February 15, 2008
New Foster Care and Adoption Individual Categorical Codes in MA case

As a member of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (**ICAMA**), NYS will provide Medicaid to children from other states with valid state Adoption Subsidy Agreements who are eligible for either Title IV-E Adoption Assistance or state adoption subsidy.

In an effort to enhance reporting capabilities, including **ICAMA**, effective 10/22/07, the NYS Department of Health, in cooperation with OCFS, created new Medicaid Individual Categorical Codes (ICC) for children in foster care and adopted children. The new ICC's are listed below with applicable case type.

ICC	Description	Case Type
74	IV-E Adoption	20
75	Non-NYS Non IV-E Adoption Residing in NYS	20
76	NYS Non-IV-E Adoption residing outside of NYS	20
77	Non-IV-E Foster Care	20
78	IV-E Foster Care	13
79	SSI Blind Foster Care	22
80	SSI Disabled Foster Care	22
81	NYS Non IV-E Foster Care Residing outside of NYS	20

These new ICCs should be used when opening new or reauthorizing existing Medicaid cases. Please contact your local WMS coordinator or Medicaid Supervisor regarding specifics.

This GIS is intended to reinforce the October 2007 DOH issuance and promote appropriate usage as there are no systemic edits in place to enforce, for example, that an MA recipient (CT 20 w/ICC 74) is, in fact, an active IVE Adoption Subsidy recipient in a Services (CT 40) case. Timely, accurate procedural communication between LDSS Services and MA staff is critical.

Need More Info
The Department of Health (DOH) WMS Coordinator letter on this topic, dated 10-09-07, is available at the NYS Department of Health website: http://health.state.nyenet/rev2007coord.htm .

For systems questions, please contact OCFS-IT Customer Support at 1-800-342-3727.

As you are aware, all GIS messages are available in the Public Folders by following the path identified below.
All Public Folders/dfa.state.ny.us/OCFS/TSU/ ***Services systems Reference Documents/ GIS (system change notices)

GIS 08 - #001 - Dated February 13, 2008
WMS Client Identification Number (CIN) Consolidation Process
(Please note that this piece is pertinent to local districts only.)
A new GIS message was communicated on Thursday, February 13th. The purpose of the GIS is to inform Local Districts of an enhancement to the WMS Client Identification Number (CIN) Consolidation process that was migrated to WMS Production on 10/22/07. This process allows a faster and more direct resolution with less processing steps to follow, by giving the district an on-line capability to remedy most multiple CIN occurrences. It also requires that the district assign a new security function to the staff designated to carry out the on-line CIN Consolidation task.

The OTDA-IT Customer Response Center (formerly known as the WMS Help Desk), currently has a mailbox set up to receive all WMS CIN Consolidation forms via e-mail to the mailbox address of: OTDA.SM.WMSCIN. Upstate Local Districts will now be able to complete the WMS CIN Consolidation process directly on-line when consolidating multiple CIN situations within their district, and will only need to use the 'old' process of e-mailing multiple CINs to OTDA when they involve multiple district involvement.

For this new on-line process, a new security function of 0188 – CIN Consolidation – has been made available in NYSeWebstar under the TTSS Menu, for assignment to staff performing the new on-line CIN Consolidation. Please work with your local district TTSS Administrator to identify appropriate staff for this online CIN Consolidation security function. Staff can access the data entry screen for CIN Consolidation via the WMS Menu, screen WMSMNU, selection F7 – NS Data Entry & Disposition (WCINC1) CIN Consolidation.

Local Districts are reminded that an adopted child's 'new' CIN should never be consolidated with their 'original' CIN.

<u>Need More Info</u>
For more information regarding the WMS CIN Consolidation process, please visit the OTDA-IT website at: <u>http://otda.state.nyenet/it/notices.asp</u>

For questions regarding the WMS CIN Consolidation process, please contact the OTDA-IT Customer Response Center at 1-800-342-3010 or the OCFS-IT Customer Support at 1-800-342-3727.

As you are aware, all GIS messages are available in the Public Folders by following the path identified below.
*All Public Folders/dfa.state.ny.us/OCFS/TSU/ ***Services systems Reference Documents/ GIS (system change notices)*

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet…

The following document(s) were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:

- *The CONNECTIONS Weekly for the week of January 25, 2008*
- UPDATED – The Build 18.9 Job Aid – Health Services and the Revisions document
- Correspondence from the Division of Child Welfare and Community Services Deputy Commissioner Jane Lynch

Weekly System Maintenance…

Due to regularly scheduled system maintenance, the CONNECTIONS application will not be available on…

- *Wednesday, 2/27/08* from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- *Friday, 2/29/08* from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- *Wednesday 3/5/08* from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM