THE CONNECTIONS WEEKLY
May 2-May 9, 2008

Happy Cinco De Mayo!

18 HOUR CONNECTIONS OUTAGE FROM FRIDAY NIGHT TO SATURDAY--*The Implementation of an Oracle Upgrade and What That Means…*(Please Note that a more detailed item on this topic was included in the bulletins from April 4 and 11.)

In keeping with the idea of a *transformation*, we continue to look for improvements that can be made to the infrastructure that "supports" the CONNECTIONS application. As a step to this end, we are upgrading the "database" of the application, and will be implementing this upgrade on **Friday, May 2nd**. **There will be a downtime window of eighteen (18) hours – beginning Friday evening at 6:00 PM and concluding at noon on Saturday, May 3rd.** We are aware that this is a lengthier downtime than you are used to, and the reason for this is so that we can build in time to make sure that the application is performing properly in the upgraded environment. Please be assured that before we implement this upgrade we will have "tested" it in various environments here at OCFS first. The local districts are adding to a "real time" test.

There will be more to come about the 'Transformation' and what it means to you in your daily work environments, so stay tuned!

Deputy Commissioner Travis also distributed a letter on Friday, April 25 to Local Commissioners and Executive Directors announcing this upgrade. The letter has been posted to the CONNECTIONS website at: *http://OCFS.State.NYENET/Connect/*

Letter distributed on Casework Contact Requirements

On April 18, 2008 a letter was sent from Nancy Martinez, Director of Strategic Planning and Policy Development, to district Commissioners and Directors of Service advising them of the federal and State requirements for casework contacts between foster children and their caseworkers. OCFS has, as required, submitted the initial report of our data to the federal agency, and as indicated in the letter, there is a long way to go to meet the federal standard (90% of foster children visited on a monthly basis) by October 1, 2011.

Attached to the letter were district data for December, 2007 and directions for obtaining casework contact reports from the OCFS Data Warehouse.

Included in the letter were instructions for properly documenting these casework contacts in CONNECTIONS.

Staff is reminded of the following:

> All such contacts must be documented in CONNECTIONS Progress Notes. It is essential that entries be made contemporaneous with the event date. Furthermore, data fields/values for these entries must include:
>
> - the child as both focus and participant;
> - location as: adoptive home, foster home, congregate care facility;
> - location for children on trial discharge: case address, parent's home, relative's home.
>
> At least one discrete contact must be documented for each month the child is in foster care or on trial discharge. DO NOT use "Summary" to meet this requirement, because this will result in an inability to access and aggregate the required data.

The letter and attachments are attached to this email and posted on the CONNECTIONS Website at: *http://OCFS.State.NYENET/Connect/*

OCFS Data Warehouse Casework Contact Reports FAQ

The OCFS Data Warehouse Team has prepared a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for the Casework Contact reports (See Attached). The document has been posted on the Intranet at http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse. Data Warehouse users can access the Casework Contact reports as follows:

1. From Cognos 8, click on the "OCFS Data Warehouse" tab, if it is not already open. [For help accessing Cognos 8 or the OCFS Data Warehouse tab, view the Quick Reference Guide at http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwstep.asp.]
2. Click on "Casework Contact Reports".
3. Click on the link for the folder that displays. [Contract agency staff will see a "Voluntary Agencies" folder, LDSS staff will see a "Local Districts and Regional Offices" folder, and State staff will see both folders.]
4. Click on the link for the Casework Contact report that you want to run.
5. Complete the report prompts to run the report for any completed month.

Requests for access and other correspondence regarding the OCFS Data Warehouse should be directed to data.warehouse@ocfs.state.ny.us.

New CONNECTIONS CBT's about to go out…

Three new Computer Based Training modules (CBT's) have been developed to assist caseworkers and other staff in the use of the CONNECTIONS application. These CBT's will be mailed out in the next week. The CBT topics are:

- **Understanding Critical Features of the FASP:** The primary focus of this CBT is to help the learner navigate through some of the more involved aspects of the FASP

- **Maintaining Data Integrity: Person Searches, Merges, and Splits:** The primary focus of this course is improving data integrity in the CONNECTIONS data base by improving learners' decision-making while performing Person Searches, Merges, and Splits.

- **Recording Health Services V.2 in CONNECTIONS (Updated):** This CBT is intended for Health Services Specialists and other child welfare staff responsible for documenting vital health services information into CONNECTIONS to maintain continuity of care for children. This product is an updated version of the earlier health CBT in order to incorporate changes to the health module introduced in Build 19.9.1.

Good News! The AFCARS Report: 'Children In Care With No Clinical Diagnosis'… An Updated Version… In previous bulletins we notified you of the availability of the April version of this monthly report. The report documents excellent progress state wide toward meeting the AFCARS standard of compliance of 90% of all children with a clinical diagnosis. Since the September, 2007 submission to the federal government, New York's rate of compliance has increased from 30% to 60%. There has been significant improvement both in New York City and in the rest of the state. This is encouraging news, but we need you to continue to input this information until we have reached at least a 90% compliance rate, and hopefully 100% of all children with the appropriate diagnostic information.

Please note that this report can only be accessed by a few individuals at the local district who perform this function and in order to access the report you need a designated password that has been assigned by OCFS. The new version of the report, like the last, is based upon the AFCARS population as extracted from CCRS. The report lists individual children who do not show the appropriate diagnostic information, along with CCRS and CONNECTIONS ID numbers, the case planner and case manager, and agencies that are involved, if applicable.

A reminder, to meet AFCARS requirements for each clinical diagnosis for a child in placement over 30 days, staff must enter at least one AFCARS diagnosis for any domain type <u>OR</u>, enter one of the following appointment types in the physical/medical domain:

- Well Child
- Initial Assessment
- Re-Assessment

with any diagnosis or a blank diagnosis.

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 May 2-9, 2008
- FAQ Document for Data Warehouse Casework Contact Reports
- Letter to the field on casework contacts (April 25)
- Letter from Deputy Commissioner Travis regarding the CONNECTIONS database upgrade described above in this bulletin (April 25)

Weekly System Maintenance…

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

- **Friday, 5/02/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Wednesday, 5/07/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- **Friday, 5/09/08** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM

Please Note: Donna Cramer, the usual presenter of this information has been out for several weeks, but is expected back next week. As she has recovered from a seriously broken arm and follow up surgery, I have been producing the weekly bulletin. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Gerry Magnes