

*~ The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY ~
September 8 ~ 15, 2006*



The CONNECTIONS Program Improvement Plan Update...

The CONNECTIONS PIP (CPIP) team continues to monitor the system to track performance and asks that if users experience any issues with the application they report them to the NYS OFT Enterprise Help Desk at 1-800-NYS (697)-1323. The CPIP team thanks you for your continued assistance in this regard!

Activities for the week of September 1 ~ 8, 2006

The CONNECTIONS PIP team is currently modifying the plan and expects to have further information relative to the plan content within the next week. As you are aware, the post-Build 18.7.4 timings have been conducted and are available on the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Home page. We caution those that access this document use it as a reference point only. If your agencies performance is deemed "slow" we ask that you contact the OFT Enterprise Help Desk to report this issue.

Information About the Availability of the Preview Application...

Earlier this week we forwarded a communication to local district and voluntary agency Implementation Coordinators regarding the availability of the Preview application for designated individuals in both local districts and voluntary agencies. As you know, the Preview application provides users with an opportunity to practice using new CONNECTIONS Case Management functionality. Preview will operate a bit differently this time around, in that we are requesting agencies to designate individuals that they wish to be granted access to the Preview application. Look for this memo on the CONNECTIONS intranet website.

Build 18.8.5 Release Notes...

Build 18.8.5, which is scheduled for roll-out on September 29, 2006, will include the implementation of several fixes to CONNECTIONS application functionality, as well as changes to CONNECTIONS to support a new process for SCR Database Checks that will impact the State Central Registry only. Among the fixes are: that new stages on the workload will no longer remain grey following access, pagination will be supported within the INV stage CPRS Progress Notes, the copy Progress Notes feature will be supported from an Initial INV to a subsequent INV when there is an FSS in the case, and from an FSS to an INV, and correction of the Address Validation functionality in the Resource address detail. This Build will also add new security attributes to support the implementation of functionality that will be included in Build 18.9. The Build Release Notes, which will be communicated and posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet site early next week, will identify detailed descriptions of each fix.

Build 18.9 Forums...

Just a note to look for information on the Build 18.9 Regional Forums that are being planned for the Fall. The Forums will provide detailed information on the new functionality that will be included with the implementation of Build 18.9.

More Info About CONNECTIONS Build 18.9...

Yesterday, a communication was sent to agency Implementation Coordinators about planning for application access for agency staff relative to the implementation of CONNECTIONS Build 18.9. This communication identified that there *may* be staff in both local districts or voluntary agencies that will need access to CONNECTIONS following the release of Build 18.9, who do not currently have access to the application. We request that the extent of this need be determined by each agency. If agencies need assistance in determining this need they should work with their CONNECTIONS Regional Office Field representative to develop a plan to address this need.

CONNECTIONS Build 18.9 will support the recording of health and educational information in specific modules in the Family Services Stage. Build functionality will also increase automated support for the production of the Permanency Hearing Report. The new *Health Record* includes the recording of health status, health exams, clinical diagnoses, medications, early intervention and other select information regarding children's health history. If an agency currently employs Health Specialists to maintain health related information, these staff are likely candidates for recording at least some of this information in CONNECTIONS. In the new *Education Record*, staff will record a foster child's educational progress and history and that of children in preventive cases at the district's option. Education Coordinators may require access to the system. The new Permanency Hearing Report template will "live" within the CONNECTIONS application, thus making it possible to pre-fill the report with information from other parts of the application.

As such, there are three groups of staff who may potentially require access to CONNECTIONS; these are *health specialists, educational specialists and court liaisons*. The extent of need in each agency will depend on the business practices that will be developed in preparation for the Build, as well as the agencies present system configuration. If you identify staff who do not currently have access to CONNECTIONS, who will need access when Build 18.9 is implemented you should contact your CONNECTIONS Regional Office Field representative. Please note that if any of these staff have access to a district or agency owned PC, access to CONNECTIONS can be arranged through a high speed, secure internet connection.

CONNECTIONS System Build 18 Job Aid ~ Interfaces...

The CONNECTIONS System Build 18 Job Aid ~ Interfaces is available for use and has been posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet! This Job Aid is divided into two modules; the first is intended primarily for CONNECTIONS users and the second module's audience is the WMS worker. Each module provides information about the interfaces between the CONNECTIONS and the two Legacy systems ~ the Welfare Management System and Child Care Review Service.

THANKS... and an Update About Completing the District Agency Profile...

We have gotten a GREAT response to our request to update the DAP! **THANKS** to all of you who have provided updated info! Now...to those of you who haven't been able to get to this task, you still have a bit of time. We ask that you complete the requested information contained on the Staff Build 18.9 page ~ Staff by Function ~ by cob **September 15th**. The information that you provide is critical to the training and support plan that is currently being developed for the implementation of Build 18.9.

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet...

The following documents were recently posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website:

- The CONNECTIONS Weekly
- CONNECTIONS System Build 18 Job Aid ~ Interfaces
- Preview Memo and Preview Access form

Weekly System Maintenance...

CONNECTIONS Application Downtime...

- ***Friday, 9/8/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Wednesday, 9/13/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Friday, 9/15/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Wednesday, 9/20/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM