

..THE CONNECTIONS WEEKLY..

May 30 - June 6, 2008



CONNECTIONS BUILD & System Outage, tonight, Friday, May 30

Tonight there will be a 3 hour system outage from 6-9 pm to enable the implementation of a new Build (SIR 8443) that will address two recent, intermittently occurring problems in the CONNECTIONS application:

- When workers are in the FASP in a Family Services Stage and access the Case Summary Tab, the Assigned Worker Grid at the bottom of the tab window may be blank.
- When workers are in the Health Tab, and have opened the “Designating Health Responsibility” Window, the Responsible Agency List may be blank.

Both problems have occurred intermittently for some users and are the result of the upgrade to Oracle 10 which was implemented several weeks ago.

Phenobarbital Added to Medications list in CONNECTIONS

The Medication field in the Health Tab of CONNECTIONS is populated by a list of medications that are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Users enter the name of the medication (or a part of the name) and then select the medication from this list. The drug Phenobarbital, a medication that is commonly prescribed to control seizures in children, is not included on the FDA list because its use pre-dates the current FDA approval process. However, it has become apparent that because of its wide use, it needs to be part of the medication list. As of Friday May 23, Phenobarbital has been added to the list of medications that displays on the Medication Tab. It can now be selected and it will be recorded in the Medications tab and will display on outputs listing medications.

Postponement of Upgrade to Internet Explorer Version 7...

Last week we announced that an upgrade to Internet Explorer 7 was planned for June 6, 2008. However, this upgrade has been postponed. The new implementation date has not yet been established.

When it does occur, this upgrade will EXCLUDE customer machines running Windows 2000, because Internet Explorer Version 7 does not run on Windows 2000 machines.

New Names for CONNECTIONS Builds

Fixes and improvements to Connections usually are designed, developed, grouped together and implemented periodically through "Builds." Each Build receives a numerical designation, such as Build 18.9.7, planned for the end of June. As of the start of 2008, these improvements will be implemented on a quarterly basis. Therefore, to simplify the naming system and enable users to more easily keep track of each Build, they are now being called Quarterly Improvement Plans and are referred to this year as Q1-08; Q2-08; Q3-08 and Q4-08. The "Q1,2,3, or 4 refers the quarter of the year beginning in January and "08" means this year. Build 18.9.7 to be released in June is also called "Q2 -08." In the future, after Build 18.9.10, the "Build" designation will be dropped and the improvements will be referred to as "Q1,2,3,or 4- the year."

OCFS Data Warehouse ~ Security Reports and In Care Detail Report Updates (posted last week)

The In Care Detail Report is available to users again. The report provides detailed information on children currently in foster care, including placements, movements, and family members. Data Warehouse users can access the In Care Detail Report 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 the link for the "Child Welfare Services Reports" folder.
3. Click on the "In Care Detail Report" to run it.
4. Enter a CIN at the report prompt.
5. Click on the Finish button, and wait for the report to finish processing.

The following predefined Security reports have been updated to include a column for Worker Status (active/deleted): Assignee Designee Report, Business Function Report, Staff Security Report, and Unit Approver Report. "Active" workers are those with a current unit assignment in CONNECTIONS. "Deleted" workers have been deleted (not end-dated) from CONNECTIONS, but keep their unit assignment in the OCFS Data Warehouse. [Note: "Inactive" (end-dated) workers will not appear in these reports because they no longer have a unit assignment in CONNECTIONS.] Data Warehouse users can access the updated Security 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 the link for the "Security" folder.
3. Click on the name of the report that you want to run.
4. Complete the report prompts to run the report.

Documentation for the reports is located on the Intranet site at <http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwreports.asp>. Requests for access and other correspondence regarding the OCFS Data Warehouse should be directed to data.warehouse@ocfs.state.ny.us.

Good News! The AFCARS Report: 'Children In Care With No Clinical Diagnosis'... An Updated Version...(Note: This item was also included in last week's Bulletin)

In previous bulletins we notified you of the availability of monthly versions of this report. The new posting contains children in care as of April 1-30, 2008. This reflects the current AFCARS reporting cycle that commenced on April 1, 2008. 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 65%. 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. They can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

<\\fnphsen0a1ah\Groups\CONNECTIONS\Build 18\AFCARS Reports>>.

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. In addition, two data elements requested by Contract Agencies have been added to the reports: case name and stage end date.

There are some technical changes to the reports. Now "in care" is defined as those children in care on the last day of the period or whose discharge was entered anytime during the period. This will differ slightly from the last version, where "in care" was defined as those children in care on the first day of the period or whose admission was entered anytime during the period. Another change in this version is that those children in care less than 30 days are now included. We include them now because by the end of the period they will have been in care at least 30 days.

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 OR, 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.

The Portable Information Technology Demonstration Project - An Invitation to Participate...

(Note: This item was also included in last week's Bulletin)

On Thursday, May 15th, a communication was forwarded to local district Commissioners inviting them to participate in the Portable Information Technology Demonstration Project. All districts, including those that participated in the pilot and demonstration phases, are eligible to participate in this year's project. The project has two objectives:

- to determine best practices in portable information technology for child protective services (CPS) caseworkers; and
- to streamline the CPS workforce's workload by permitting CPS caseworkers to work from field locations while investigating allegations of child abuse and maltreatment.

Two documents were included in the communication that further describe both the project and the application process. The first document is a letter, penned by William E. Travis, Jr., Deputy Commissioner, OCFS Division of Information Technology that provides a view of the project, as well as contact information; the attachment specifies the required contents of letters requesting participation, and the criteria OCFS will use to evaluate local district responses.

For further information related to the OCFS reports on the pilot, expanded pilot and demonstration phase of the project, including the CTG evaluations, we refer you to the postings on the OCFS internet site at the following address: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/reports>.

For your reference, these documents are posted to the Home page of the CONNECTIONS intranet website.

Preview Refresh...

Just so that you know, the Preview environment will be refreshed Sunday evening, June 1 and every Sunday evening for the foreseeable future. This refresh will update the cases and data in Preview to what is in the Production application data base as of the refresh date. We will keep you posted if this schedule changes.

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 30, 2008
- Letter and attachment regarding the Portable Information Technology Project
- New Security Reports from the Data Warehouse--
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwreports.asp>
- OCFS Data Warehouse News and Notes ~ May 2008--
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/datawarehouse/dwnews.asp>

Weekly System Maintenance...

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

- Friday, 5/30/08 from 4:00 AM - 7:00 AM
- Wednesday, 6/4/08 from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM
- Friday, 6/6/08 from 5:00 AM - 7:00 AM