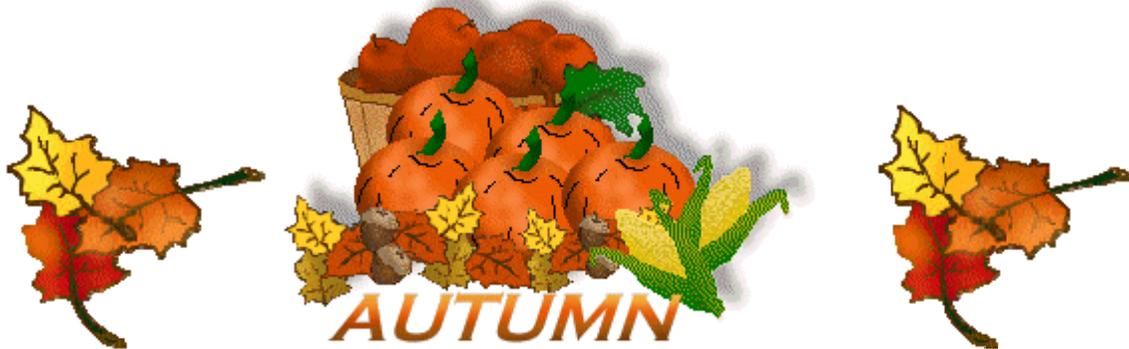## ~ The CONNECTIONS WEEKLY ~
September 22 ~ 29, 2006

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! The CONNECTIONS PIP team is currently modifying the plan and expects to have further information relative to the plan content within the next few weeks.

The Direction of CONNECTIONS…

On September 7th a letter was forwarded to local district Commissioners and voluntary agency Executive Directors detailing the current status of the CONNECTIONS Project, the immediate direction that the Project is moving in, related to the implementation of Build 18.9, as well as planning for the future of CONNECTIONS. For your reference, a copy of this letter has been posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet website.

Updated Info on Build 18.8.5…
Build 18.8.5 Release Notes

The Build 18.8.5 Release Notes were communicated on Friday, September 15th. The Release Notes describe the content of the Build and are posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet on the Home page.

Build 18.8.5 Implementation Date Change

There has been a slight change in the implementation date of Build 18.8.5 and the implementation date is scheduled for *Friday, October 13th*. The reason for the brief postponement is due to the necessity of the Office for Technology (OFT) to perform switch replacements during the weekend of September 29th (which was the original implementation date of this Build). Information about the date change was forwarded earlier this week in a communication to Implementation, Security and Back-up Security Coordinators, Directors of Service, Resource Users and other designated district and agency staff.

A Brief Intro to CONNECTIONS Build 18.9...

CONNECTIONS Build 18.9 is on schedule for implementation in December 2006. Build 18.9 will provide additional automated support for the Permanency Report as well as critical improvements to Case Management functionality pursuant to direction from the Project's governance committees. The Build will support the recording of health and educational information in specific modules in the Family Services Stage. The new _Health Record_ includes the recording of key health information regarding children in foster care, as well as for those children who are free for adoption. (Health information may also be recorded for children receiving preventive services.) This includes health status, health exams, vital information, clinical diagnoses, medications, early intervention and other select information regarding children's health history, along with genetic information about their biological parents. In the new _Education Record_, staff will record key information regarding school placements and associated information for children in foster care, as well as for those children receiving preventive services and who are free for adoption. The new Permanency Hearing Report template will "live" within the CONNECTIONS application, thus making it possible to pre-fill the Permanency Hearing Report from demographic information, tracked child detail, the most recently approved FASP and the Health and Education modules. Changes to the Foster and Adoptive Home Development modules required to differentiate Adoption and Foster Care homes and to indicate where Adoption Subsidy is being paid will also be included in this Build.

Planning for CONNECTIONS Build 18.9...

Recently, a communication was sent to agency Implementation Coordinators about planning for CONNECTIONS 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.

News from the OCFS Data Warehouse Team...
The SPR Outstanding Detail Report...

The Data Warehouse Team is pleased to announce a new predefined report in the Cognos ReportNet environment. The title of the report is the "SPRs Outstanding Detail" report and this report provides a list of Service Plan Reviews that have been recorded in CONNECTIONS since 7/8/06 and have no accompanying "Date Held."

The report is similar to the existing FASP reports in that there is a local district version and a voluntary agency version and users must complete several prompts in order to run the report. For your reference, there is an SPR Reports Step-by-

Step Guide, as well as an FAQ document that has been created to answer questions that may arise when the report is viewed. These documents are available on the Data Warehouse page of the CONNECTIONS Intranet site.

If you have access to the Cognos ReportNet environment and the FASP reports, you can find the new SPR report in the "OCFS DW – SPR Reports" folder. If you do not have access to the Cognos ReportNet environment, you can request access by emailing the Data Warehouse Team at data.warehouse@ocfs.state.ny.us. We ask that you include your full name and HSEN ID and "cc" your Director on the email.

Last Call for the Preview Application Requests…

As you are aware, earlier this month we forwarded a communication regarding the availability of the Preview application for designated individuals in both local districts and voluntary agencies; for your convenience the memo is posted on the CONNECTIONS intranet. We ask that all requests for the Preview application functionality be in by Friday, September 29th.

Did You Know…

** We ask that you share this info with all staff who may enter, or author notes in CONNECTIONS.

Copying and then pasting documents, such as scanned court records and certificates, or copied e-mails, tables, and WORD documents with heavy formatting, will corrupt the Progress Note. Narrative fields in the Progress Note component of the CONNECTIONS application are **text** fields only. If a user attempts to paste an entire WORD document, a scanned document, a picture, a table or a screen print into a narrative field it can result in the user being unable to view or print the Progress Note. It is recommended that users copy and paste **text** only into the narrative fields. The alternative to scanning/copying & pasting these items is to reference in the Progress Notes where the originals are stored. Please note, however, that copying and then pasting Progress Notes from a typical WORD document or Dragon Speak will *not* corrupt the note.

As a help tool, the SUNY Training Strategies Group revised an existing document, the CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet ~ Build 17 Progress Notes Instructions, to include modifications that have been made via the implementation of Build 18. The revised Tip Sheet is posted to the CONNECTIONS intranet. The path to the document is: http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect > Step-by-Step/Job Aids/Tips > Job Aids/Tip Sheets > CONNECTIONS Tip Sheet ~ Progress Notes Instructions.

New Postings to the CONNECTIONS Intranet…

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

- The CONNECTIONS Weekly
- CONNECTIONS Permanency Alerts Batch Release Notes
- Legal Activity Codes for Permanency document

- CONNECTIONS Build 18.8.5 Release Notes
- OCFS Data Warehouse Case management Report FAQ's ~ Understanding the SPRs Outstanding Detail Report
- SPR Reports Step-by Step Guide ~ OCFS Data Warehouse   Case Management (Build 18) Reports
- Letter to Commissioners and Executive Directors (dated September 7, 2006)

Weekly System Maintenance...
CONNECTIONS Application Downtime...
- ***Friday, 9/22/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Wednesday, 9/27/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Friday, 9/29/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- ***Wednesday, 10/4/06*** from 5:00 AM – 7:00 AM