North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST)
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Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor
Albert A. Delia, Acting Secretary

Anthony Vellucci, Director

May 4, 2012

Subject: New Project 1 Primary Pilot County Go-Live Date

Dear County Director of Social Services:

As the NC FAST Project 1 go-live date approaches, I want to share the latest update with you regarding project status. During the April 27 weekend, project staff conducted a Mock Conversion exercise. This around-the-clock exercise consisted of performing over 400 individual tasks required to deploy NC FAST into the production environment during go-live weekend. While the Mock Conversion went well, we did experience a few challenges. As a result, we are refining our processes and tasks to improve our approach, and will continue performing tests to assure the process runs smoothly for the actual go-live weekend.

As part of the Mock Conversion activity, we brought 3 Johnston County staff to the project site to enter actual county cases to confirm the system functions as designed. I am pleased to share that the Johnston County Champion, an FNS Supervisor and an FNS Caseworker experienced great success entering live transactions for new and recertified cases, as well as change in circumstances cases, during this exercise. All cases were entered successfully and all benefit amounts were calculated correctly.

From an application standpoint, I am pleased to report that there are no critical or severe defects with the software. Those types of defects are considered "blockers" because they have no known workarounds. There are still a small number of high defects (approximately 12) that we are working hard to resolve prior to go-live. These do have workarounds, but in the interest of the counties, we want to see them resolved prior to go-live. Earlier this week, we received a delivery of updated Cúram software (the software that provides the foundation for NC FAST). This new software has been installed and is being made available for testing today. Given that the go-live conversion activities take the entire weekend, the window for testing the new Cúram software and resolving the small number of high defects is very narrow.

On May 2, I provided the NC FAST Executive Advisory Committee (EAC) with the results of the Mock Conversion weekend exercise. To ensure the rollout for Pilot Counties goes smoothly, I recommended that the 4 Pilot Counties (Carteret, Catawba, Guilford, and Johnston Counties) go live on May 21 instead of May 7. The 4 Pilot County Directors agreed with this recommendation as it will improve system functionality for them by allowing the Project Team to work through more defects and improve and further test the conversion processes. Only the 4 initial Pilot Counties will be impacted by this change. We feel this minor schedule change far outweighs going live May 7 as it will improve the Pilot Counties' rollout experience. No other schedule changes are expected at this time for the 2 alternate Pilot Counties or for each phased rollout. Alternate Pilot Counties and all phased counties are on schedule for going live with NC FAST in accordance with the current schedule.

In addition, the User Acceptance Test (UAT) environment will be available this week for Pilot Counties and Super Users in the remaining 96 counties so that staff may practice in NC FAST and continue to enhance their skills. Likewise, the FAST Help tool will also be available this week as a resource for learning more about how to work in NC FAST, and to help troubleshoot any challenges that users may encounter when using the UAT environment. Please keep in mind this is a test environment with known defects that are or will be resolved in a later release within the next few weeks.

I am also encouraging users to contact the NC FAST Help Desk if problems are encountered when practicing in the UAT environment. The Help Desk phone number is (919) 855-3200, Option 3. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.

During pilot go-live week, NC FAST Readiness Team staff and trainers will be onsite at the Pilot Counties to assist as needed. As we approach May 21, more information regarding Pilot County go-live will be shared with each Pilot County Champion through the NC FAST Readiness Liaisons. Be assured that NC FAST staff will be available and supportive during this very important time.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me and the NC FAST staff if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Anthony Vellucci

cc: Michael Watson, NC DHHS, Deputy Secretary for Health Services
Maria F. Spaulding, NC DHHS, Deputy Secretary for Long-Term Care and Family Services
Dan Stewart, NC DHHS, Assistant Secretary for Finance and Business Operations
Laketha Miller, NC DHHS Controller
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