North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Pat McCrory
Governor

Aldona Z. Wos, M.D.
Ambassador (Ret.)
Secretary DHHS

March 25, 2013

Dear North Carolina County Managers and Social Service Directors:

As the Secretary for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), I would like to thank every County Manager, County Director and all Department of Social Services (DSS) support personnel for their enthusiasm, support and hard work for the NC FAST (Families Accessing Services through Technology) Program. The implementation of NC FAST is the largest transformation a DSS agency has experienced since the initial implementation of many of the seven service areas encompassing NC FAST. In step with Governor McCrory's promise of clear communication, excellent customer service, and ensuring that Information Technology (IT) projects are successful, I too promise to keep these priorities at the forefront as we spend the next four years fully implementing NC FAST.

Our staff is dedicated to making NC FAST a success in your county. Joe Cooper, our newly appointed NC DHHS Chief Information Officer and I recently visited Johnston County DSS, one of the pilot counties for NC FAST. While I was there, I had the opportunity to see NC FAST firsthand and learn how NC FAST has helped change the way they operate. I heard about many innovations staff had employed to maneuver over the inevitable bumps in the road and how excited they are now that they are using the NC FAST tool.

Now that all 100 North Carolina counties are processing all Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) applications and re-certifications in NC FAST, I encourage you to contact your County DSS Director and discuss what they need to ensure continued success for your county. We have identified several key success factors as counties have transitioned to NC FAST:

1. Ensuring there is a supportive and responsive county IT presence that stays engaged with the local DSS as the county transitions to NC FAST is crucial.

2. Ensuring county DSS facilities have appropriate network bandwidth dedicated to their use. The next major upgrade to NC FAST will incorporate document management functionality that will place additional demands on network bandwidth which will need to be anticipated.

3. Ensuring that all DSS computers meet NC FAST software and hardware requirements so DSS staff are able to key transactions at a speed required to hit established performance measures.

www.ncdhhs.gov
Telephone 919-855-4800 • Fax 919-715-4645
Location: 101 Blair Drive • Adams Building • Raleigh, NC 27603
Mailing Address: 2001 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, NC 27699-2001
An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer

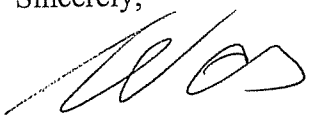
4. Consider having existing staff in other areas, like Medicaid, contribute their expertise to move the work forward, as well as hiring temporary staff and/or authorizing overtime to help address preexisting case backlogs and maintain effective processing capacity. This has helped staff in some of our counties overcome the learning curve associated with moving to a new case management system. Temporary staff or overtime authorization is usually needed for several months and is critical to the success of processing applications in a timely manner.

DHHS staff will continue to communicate frequently with County staff and provide all the support possible to assure success at local levels.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry Bradsher, DHHS Acting Deputy Secretary, at 919-855-4800.

I look forward to hearing more great success stories about the work you are doing with NC FAST.

Sincerely,



Aldona Wos, M.D.
Secretary

cc: Sherry Bradsher, DHHS Acting Deputy Secretary for Long Term Care and Family Services
Joe Cooper, N.C. DHHS Chief Information Officer
Dennis Streets, N.C. DHHS Division of Aging and Adult Services, Director
Carol Steckel, N.C. DHHS Division of Medical Assistance, Director
Laketha Miller, N.C. DHHS Controller
Karen Tomczak, N.C. DHHS Division of Information Resource Management, Director
Anthony Vellucci, N.C. FAST Director
Rebecca Troutman, N.C. Association of County Commissioners
David Atkinson, Carteret County Social Services Director, NCACDSS President