North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST)

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Governor

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Director

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Subject: Revised NC FAST Project 2&6 Pilot Launch Date

Dear County Director of Social Services:

We want to share the latest update regarding important changes to the Pilot approach and schedule for NC FAST Project 2&6. The Soft Launch date for the three Pilot Counties – Chatham, Johnston, and Orange – will now be July 15, 2013. There will no longer be a Pilot deployment on June 24. The dates for subsequent county Soft Launches will remain as communicated in the DCDL issued May 16, 2013. The rationale for this date change is twofold:

1. The NC FAST team received a major Cúram software upgrade last week and additional testing time is required prior to Pilot deployment.

2. NC TRACKS is going live July 1. NC FAST does not want to interfere with their go-live.

The scope of the Pilot deployment will continue to be:

1. All clients applying for Medicaid, Work First, Special Assistance, and Refugee Assistance who are on a closed case in EIS from one of the three Pilot counties.

2. Persons applying for the above programs in the three Pilot counties who have no open or closed cases in EIS.

We recognize that persons on closed EIS cases from one of the three Pilot counties may walk into a county department of social services office in one of the other 97 counties and apply for Medicaid, Work First, Special Assistance, or Refugee Assistance benefits prior to these counties entering Project 2&6 Soft Launch. These applications will need to be entered in NC FAST. The NC FAST team is analyzing the expected volume of these applications. The team is also actively working on a protocol for handling these situations and will communicate an approach in the coming weeks.

County staff in non-Pilot counties supporting the FNS and SNAP programs in NC FAST will see screen changes on July 15. A one-hour Web-Based Training (WBT) module together with additional reference materials are being developed to help prepare current NC FAST users for the screen changes they will see on July 15. This WBT module and reference documentation will be made available on July 8, and will be

posted in FAST Help. A statewide communication will be issued as soon as these training materials are posted. We would like to make these materials available to the counties sooner than July 8, but extra time is needed to assure they are accurate and provide the specific guidance current NC FAST users need.

Additionally, the NC FAST team is working to upgrade the version of NC FAST in the Sandbox environment. We want to provide all counties with access to the new version of NC FAST ahead of the July 15 Pilot launch. The team is still working through specific details required to complete this upgrade, including increasing the amount of server memory and processing power required to support the Sandbox environment. This is critical given the number of county staff expected to access the Sandbox once the new software is deployed to the Sandbox. The team will let counties know when the Sandbox upgrade has been completed. We expect to have this ready by the end of June.

To set appropriate expectations, the Project 2&6 version of NC FAST loaded in the Sandbox will be a pre-release version of software. It should be expected that defects will be encountered. This environment will also not support the full range of transactions available in the production system, such as changes in circumstance. It is expected that current Sandbox access credentials will still work once the upgrade has been complete. The NC FAST Training team's priority is to prepare the Project 2&6 training materials, which are currently in various stages of development and review. It is unclear at this point how many of these materials we can make available to the counties to support Sandbox use. We commit to do our best to make resources available to Sandbox users to help them use the new version of NC FAST.

We thank all counties for their patience as we refine our approach to best meet everyone's needs. In addition, we thank the Pilot counties for their flexibility in adapting to this date change. As always, do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns. NC DHHS and NC FAST management are committed to helping increase productivity in the counties and optimizing the NC FAST rollout. Thank you for your continued support as we develop and refine the best approach for Project 2&6: EIS.

Sincerely,

Anthony Vellucci

cc: Joseph Cooper, NC DHHS, Chief Information Officer
Sherry Bradsher, NC DHHS, Deputy Secretary for Long-Term Care and Family Services
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