



MONTANA LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIVISION

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AUDIT

CHIMES-EA Combined Healthcare Information and Montana Eligibility System – Enterprise Architecture

Department of Public Health and Human Services

OCTOBER 2015

15DP-01

REPORT SUMMARY

The CHIMES-EA system is largely functioning as expected with regard to client analysis and the issuance of benefits. However, the department needs to make improvements in several areas to increase the system's accuracy and efficiency, and improve user perception of system functionality. These include strengthening a number of processes for monitoring system performance; improving the process to repair system defects; strengthening the review of certain benefit overpayments; improving communication; and strengthening review of user access to the system.

Context

The Human and Community Service Division (HCSD), within the Department of Public Health and Human Services, manages public assistance programs for the state of Montana. The programs include:

- ◆ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- ◆ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- ◆ Medicaid Eligibility
- ◆ Healthy Montana Kids Eligibility

The Combined Health Information and Montana Eligibility System – Enterprise Architecture (CHIMES-EA) was implemented in November 2012 as the system to manage the eligibility for these programs. Applicant data is entered once and the system executes multiple, complex rules for each program to determine eligibility and benefit amount. Since implementation, the system has been the focus of legislative committee meetings and reports.

Due to the complexity of the system and inherent risk of these public assistance programs, our audit was purposed with

reviewing processes in place to ensure the system is functioning according to policy and regulations and monitored for efficiency. We also reviewed processes that address and resolve system issues and monitor user access, as well as conducted a survey of system users. Without a properly functioning system, a process to monitor how the system is impacting the programs, or strong issue management and user access practices, data integrity and accuracy risks are increased.

Results

Audit work identified established processes for program metric review, but a lack of connection between program monitoring and system errors that could be influencing those metrics. Processes to identify and track root causes need to be strengthened to better understand how the system impacts the accuracy and timeliness of eligibility determinations and benefit calculations.

The survey of system users provided valuable information for the audit and pointed to a poor perception of system functionality, which contrasted department management's

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perception. Survey results were used throughout the report to support audit findings.

Audit testing and observations found errors within the system; however a process for issue management exists to address them. Audit work noted processes related to governance, prioritization of issues, addressing root cause, and documentation lacked controls to ensure effectiveness. The issue management process is not monitored effectively to ensure timely resolution of issues or that it meets the needs of users and the department.

Throughout the audit, documentation of the system, policy, and procedures involving system management were noted as incomplete, out-of-date, or did not exist. Processes to ensure completeness and accuracy and review this documentation need to be strengthened.

Audit work noted a process for granting, updating, and reviewing access of individuals. However, strengthening the review of access to system databases and privileged functions and monitoring activity will increase data integrity for the program.

Recommendation Concurrence	
Concur	17
Partially Concur	0
Do Not Concur	0
Source: Agency audit response included in final report.	